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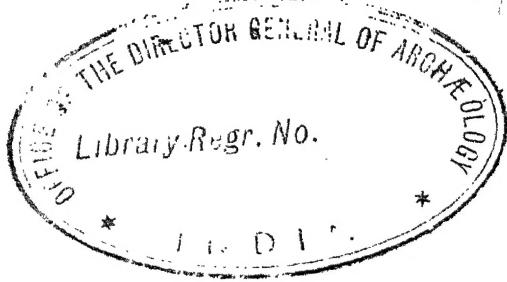
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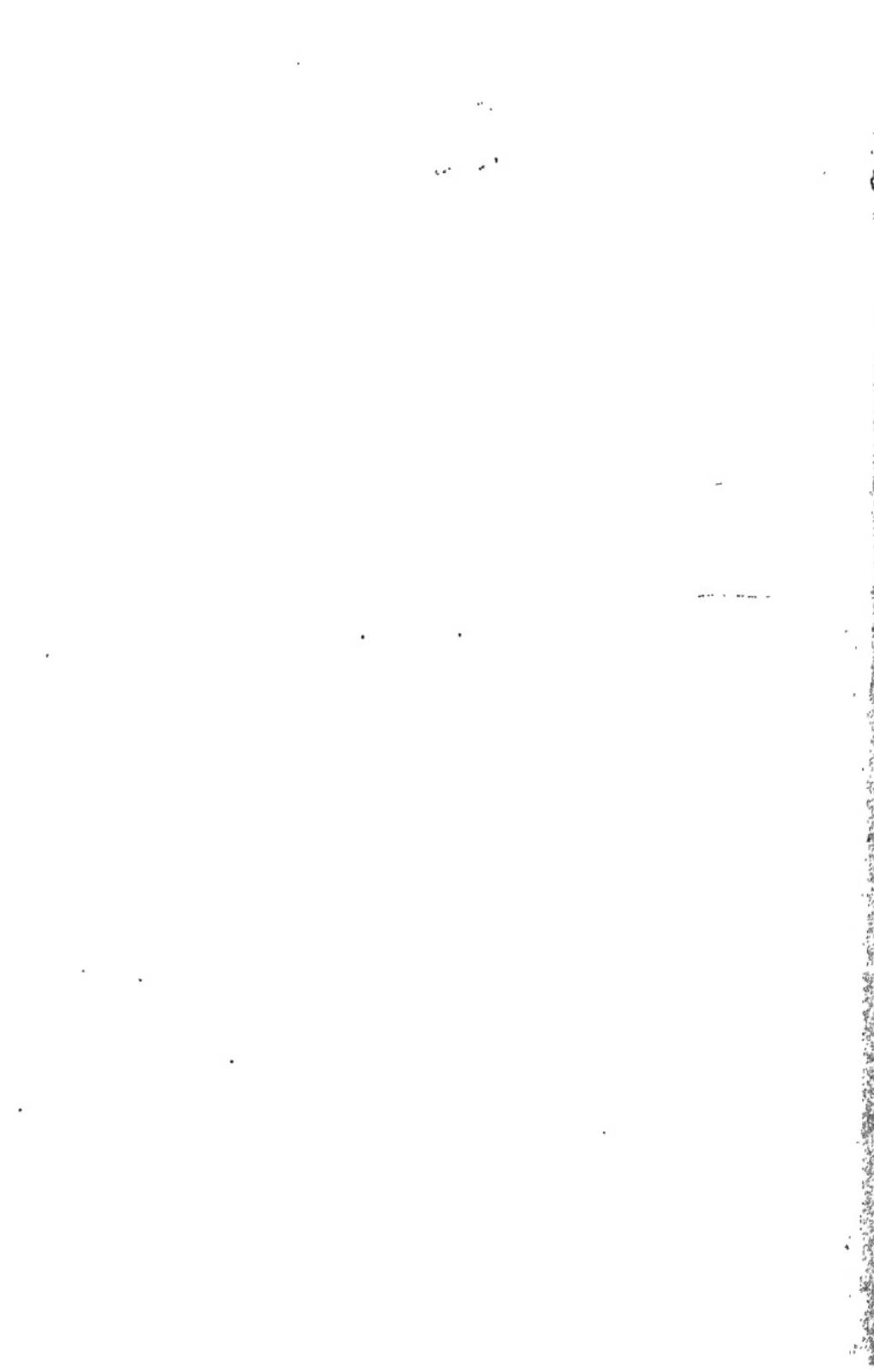
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NOT TO BE ISSUED

THE QUATRAINS

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

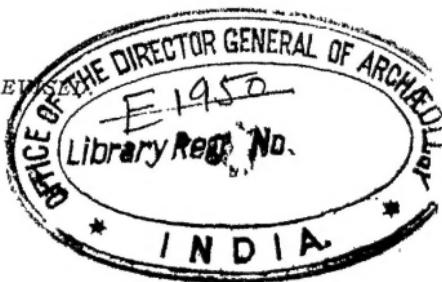
E. H. WHINFIELD, M.A.

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SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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Omar Khayyám



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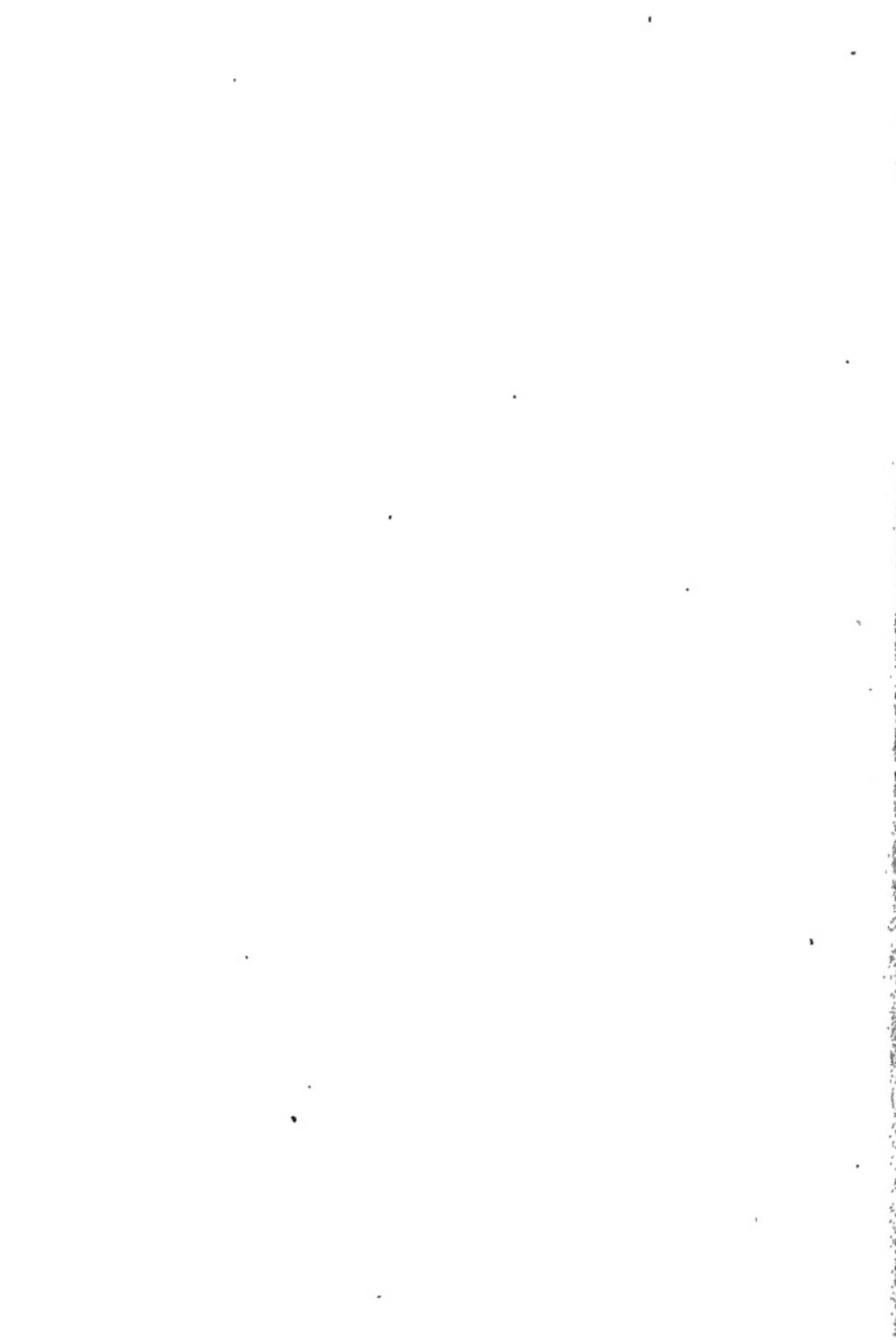
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..... "A mind
Not wholly clear, nor wholly blind,
Too keen to rest, too weak to find,
That travails sore, and brings forth wind."

M. ARNOLD.

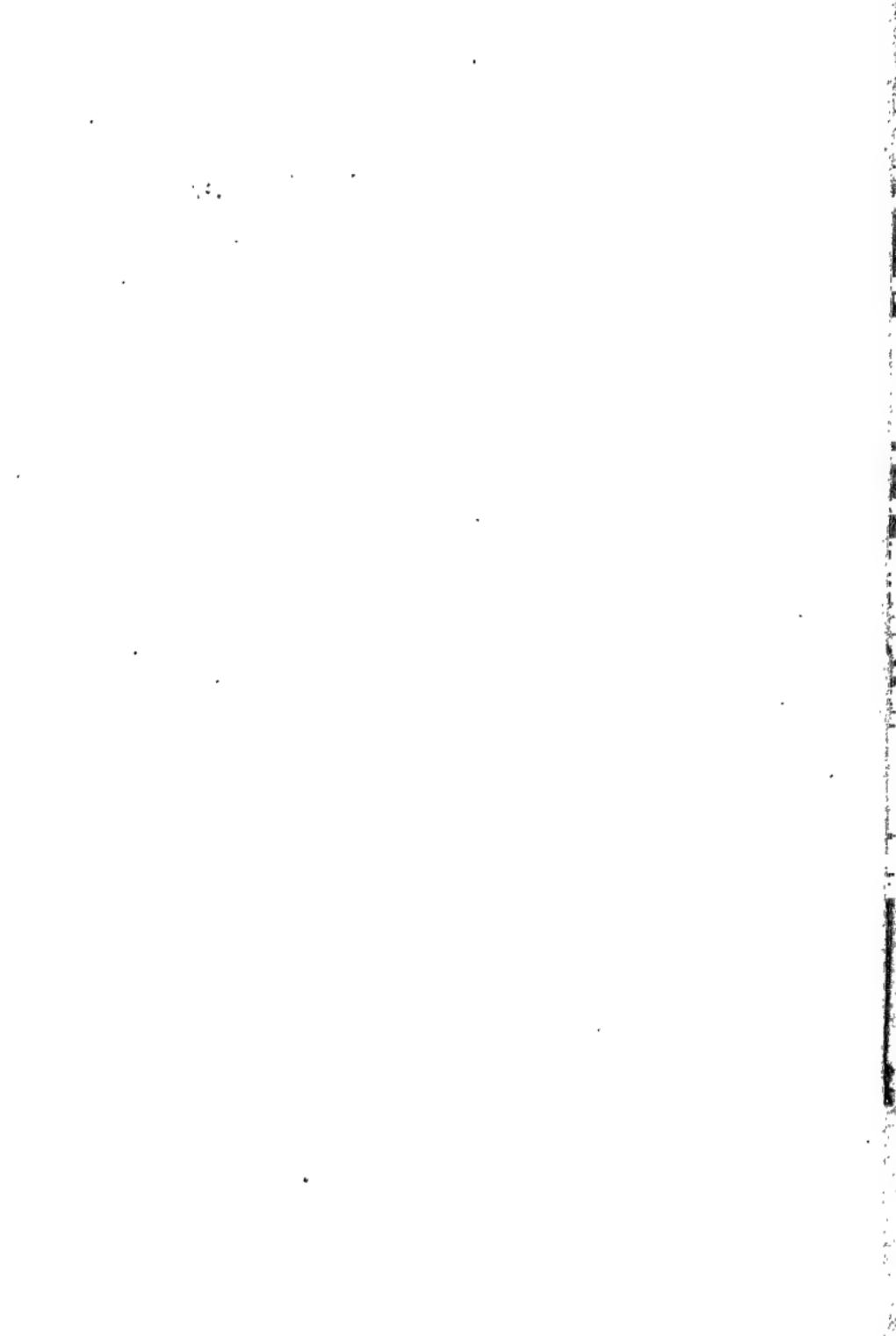


ADVERTISEMENT.

THE first edition of this book was published in 1882, and contained 253 quatrains. In 1883 I brought out an edition containing the Persian text of 500 quatrains, based on a collation of eight authorities, together with English verse translations. The present edition is not a mere reprint of that of 1882, but contains 267 of the best quatrains in my larger edition, carefully revised.

E. H. W.

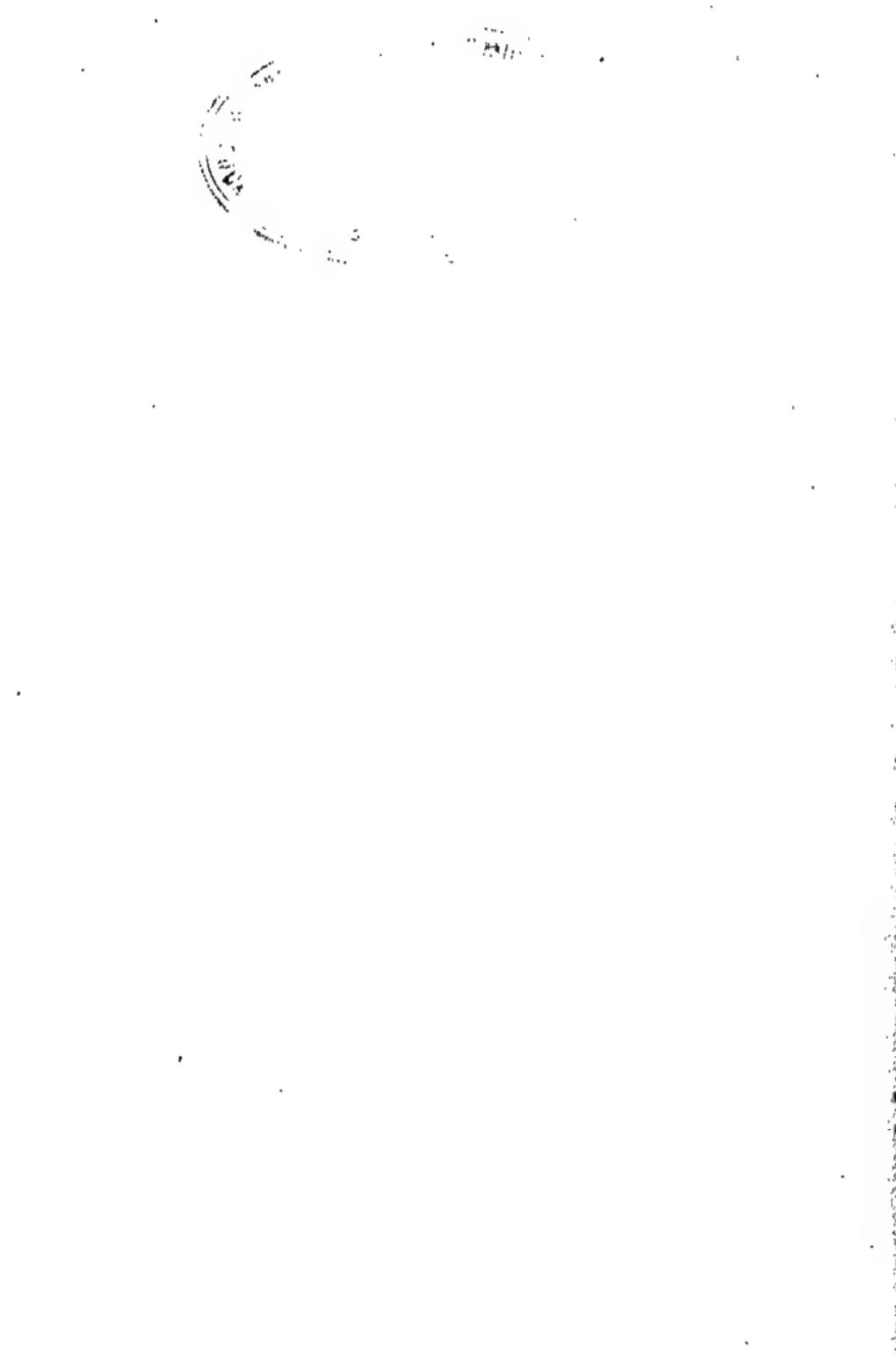
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INTRODUCTION.

I.

OMAR BIN IBRAHÍM AL KHAYYÁM was a native of Nishapúr, one of the principal cities of Khorásan. According to the preface of the Calcutta MS., he died in 517 A.H., during the reign of Sultan Sanjar. The date of his birth is nowhere mentioned, but he was contemporary with Nizám ul Mulk, the celebrated Wazir of the Seljuk kings Alp Arslan and Malik Shah; and Nizám ul Mulk has left the following notice of him in his "Testament":¹—

"Imám Muaffik of Nishapúr—(may Allah rest his soul!)—was one of the most learned men in Khorásan, and was held in the highest honour and reverence. He lived to over eighty-five years of age, and it was the common opinion that all youths who read the Koran and learned the Traditions under him, would attain to wealth and fortune. For this cause my father sent me, in charge of the lawyer 'Abd us Samad, from Tús to Nishapúr, in order that I might apply myself to study and discipline in the school of that eminent person. He on his

¹ This passage is preserved in Mirkhond's "History of the Assassins," in Khondemir's "Ilhabíb us Siyar," and in the "Dabistán." It is given in full in "Notices et Extraits des MSS.," ix. 143.

part regarded me with affection, and I for mine showed such attachment and devotion to his service that I continued with him for the space of four years. There had lately joined his class Hákím Omar Khayyám, and that miscreant Hasan ibn Sabah, both of whom were of the same age as myself, and equally remarkable for excellence of intelligence and power of intellect. We became friends, and when we went out from the Imám's class we used to repeat to one another the lesson we had just heard. . . . One day that miscreant Hasan said to us, 'It is the general opinion that the disciples of Imám Muaffik attain to fortune, and no doubt one of us will do so, even though all may not. What agreement or compact is there now between us?' I said, 'Whatever you please.' He answered, 'Whichever of us may attain to fortune shall share it with the others, and not engross it himself.' We agreed to these terms, and a compact was made accordingly. Time passed on. I went from Khorásan to Máwar ul Nahr and Ghazní and Kábul, and on my return I was preferred to the post of Wazir to Sultan Alp Arslan (455 A.H.). At that time Hákím Omar Khayyám came to me, and in regard to him I carried out all the requirements of the compact and the obligations of my engagement. On his arrival I received him with all honour and distinction, and afterwards I said to him, 'A man of your ability ought to be a servant of the Sultan, and since according to our agreement while we were with Imám Muaffik, I am bound to share my fortune with you, I will recount your merits to the Sultan, and will so impress on his mind your

abilities and attainments, that you shall be preferred to a post of trust like mine.' But Omar replied (after compliments), 'The greatest favour you can do me is to let me live in retirement, where, under your protection, I may occupy myself in amassing the riches of learning and in praying for your long life.' And to this language he steadfastly adhered. When I perceived that he spoke in sincerity, and not out of mere etiquette, I assigned him a yearly stipend of 1200 gold *miscals*, payable from the Nishapúr treasury. He then went back to Nishapúr, and applied himself to the study of the sciences, especially astronomy, in which he afterwards attained a high degree of accomplishment. Later on, in the reign of Sultan Malik Shah (465 to 485 A.H.), he came to Merv, in the height of his philosophical repute, and the Sultan conferred many favours upon him, and raised him to the highest posts attainable by men of science."

Nizám ul Mulk goes on to recount the subsequent history of Hasan Sabah—how by his aid Hasan obtained a post at court, and repaid his kindness by intriguing against him—how Hasan then fled from Khorásan, and joined the infamous sect of Ismailians or Assassins, and afterwards became their chief under the name of *Shaikh ul Jabal*, or Old Man of the Mountain.

This narrative reads so circumstantially that one can hardly do otherwise than accept it, but in that case Nizám ul Mulk's birth must be placed at least twenty years later than 408,¹ the date given both by Ibn Khalíkán and Abul Faraj; or else the accepted dates of

¹ See Vuller's "Geschichte der Seldschuken," p. 107, note.

Omar's and Hasan's deaths (517 and 518 A.H.) must be abandoned for others at least twenty years earlier.

Omar's appointment at Merv mentioned by Nizám ul Mulk was, as we learn from Abul Feda, that of Astronomer Royal. Whilst holding this office, Omar compiled some astronomical tables, of which mention is made by Haji Khalfa, and in collaboration with seven other astronomers effected a reform of the old Persian Calendar, somewhat similar to the reform of the Julian Calendar made under the auspices of Pope Gregory XIII, five centuries afterwards. The object of both reforms was to make the civil year coincide more exactly with the cycle of the seasons, and in both instances this object was sought to be accomplished by an improved system of intercalation. M. Reinaud, the editor of Abul Feda's Geography, says that some authorities even prefer Omar's system to that adopted by Pope Gregory.¹ The amended reckoning ran from the 10th Ramazan, 471 A.H., and was called *Tarikh i Jaláli*, after the reigning monarch, Sultan Jaláluddin Malik Sháh.

Omar was also highly distinguished as a mathematician. A work of his on Algebra has been edited and translated by M. Woepke of Bonn, and another, "On the Difficulties of Euclid's Definitions," is preserved in the Leyden Library. His work on Algebra enjoyed a high reputation for several centuries. Ibn Khaldun refers to it in his Prolegomena, and Haji Khalfa quotes the commencement. M. Woepke praises him for his power of generalisation and his rigorously systematic procedure.

¹ See Reinaud, "Geographie d'Abulfeda," Prolegomena, p. ci.

In his preface M. Woepke quotes from a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale an abridgment of a notice of Omar in Shahrástání's *Taríkh ul Hukama*. As Shahrástání was born in 479 A.H., and during some part of his life resided at Nishapúr,¹ he is a very good authority for the facts recorded by him, though it is evident he was no friend to Omar. The passage is as follows:—

“Omar al Khayyám, Imám of Khorásan, and the greatest scholar of his time, was versed in all the learning of the Greeks. He was wont to exhort men to seek the One Author of all by purifying the bodily actions in order to the sanctification of the soul. He also used to recommend the study of Politics as laid down in Greek authors. The later Sufis have caught at the apparent sense of parts of his poems and accommodated them to their own canon, making them a subject of discussion in their assemblies and conventicles, but the esoteric sense consists in axioms of natural religion and principles of universal obligation. When the men of his time anathematised his doctrines, and drew forth his opinions from the concealment in which he had veiled them, he went in fear of his life, and placed some check on the sallies of his tongue and his pen. He made the pilgrimage, but it was from accident rather than piety, still betraying his unorthodox views. On his arrival at Baghdad the men who prosecuted the same ancient studies as he flocked to meet him, but he shut the door in their faces, as one who had renounced those studies and cultivated them no

¹ See Haarbrücher's translation of the “Kitab al Milal wan” Nihal,” Preface, p. xi.

longer. On his return to his native city he made a practice of attending the morning and evening prayers, and of disguising his private opinions, but for all that, they were no secret. In astronomy and in philosophy he was without a rival, and his eminence in those sciences would have passed into a proverb had he only possessed self-control."

Shahrastáni's view of Omar's character appears to have been the one generally accepted by the literary men of Islam, as Abul Feda, who lived about 200 years later, writes much in the same strain, lamenting his being so much addicted to poetry and pleasure.

In an essay by the celebrated Ghazzáli of Tús, who was, like Shahrastáni, a contemporary of Omar's, there is a passage in which Omar is not improbably referred to as an example of the sceptical habit of mind induced by scientific pursuits.¹

The following story of Omar in his old age is given in the preface to the Calcutta MS. on the authority of Nizámi of Samarkand, one of his disciples :—

" I chanced to meet Maulana Omar in a garden, and in course of conversation he said, ' My tomb shall be in a certain place where each breath of the north wind shall shower down roses upon it.' I marvelled at that saying, thinking that he spoke idly. After his death I went to Nishapúr on divers occasions and visited his tomb, and it was outside a garden, and the fruit trees reached out their branches over the wall of the garden, and had dropped their blossoms over his tomb, so that it was hidden beneath them."

¹ See Schmölders, "Essai sur les Ecoles philosophiques chez les Arabes," p. 115. Ghazzáli was born in 450.

II.

The great difficulty in the way of arriving at a satisfactory text of Omar's poems arises from the exceeding variety and discrepancy of the materials. We look in vain for anything approaching to a "*Textus Receptus*." What may be called the Lower Bengal family of MSS., represented by the Asiatic Society's MS., the two India Office MSS., and the Calcutta edition, do indeed offer a tolerably uniform text, but their claim to be the best representatives of the genuine text is overthrown by their want of agreement with the Persian and Oude MSS. The Persian MSS. do not even agree with one another, the Bodleian MS., which was written at Shiráz in 865 A.H., being altogether different from the MS. lithographed at Teheran and reprinted by M. Nicolas. The Oude or Upper India MSS., again, to which belong the one lithographed at Lucknow, and probably also the Cambridge MS., include a very large number of quatrains not found elsewhere. The number of quatrains seems to increase in proportion to the modernness of the MS. Thus the old Bodleian MS. contains only 158, and the two Paris MSS. (which are both of the tenth century) only 175 and 213, while the modern Cambridge copy contains no less than 801. The late Mrs. Cadell, who collated all the MSS. of Omar in Europe, told me she had found in one place and another no less than 1200 quatrains attributed to him. She has, however, in an article in *Frazer* for May 1879, expressed the opinion that the number of genuine quatrains is not more than 250 or

300, and I am inclined to think this estimate high enough. But when one comes to consider which particular quatrains are to be pronounced genuine, and which imitations, it is not always easy to form a confident decision. The state of the case is this:—Out of all the quatrains passing under Omar's name, hardly any stand alone. Almost every one belongs to a family, more or less numerous, to the other members of which it bears a strong family likeness. One can say with some confidence that all these replicas, paraphrases, and variations of the same ideas can hardly be the work of one and the same hand; but to distinguish with certainty the handiwork of the master from that of his imitators is a task probably beyond the powers of any foreign critic living 800 years after the poems in question were written.

In this difficulty, the rule I have followed in my Persian edition is to give what seem the best specimens of each class of quatrains, and to exclude the rest. In accordance with this rule, I exclude, in particular, a large number of quatrains in praise of wine, and exhortations to live for the day, which recur in the MSS. with most wearisome frequency.

Another cognate difficulty is this, that many of the quatrains ascribed to Omar are also attributed to other poets. I have marked a few of these in the notes, and, doubtless, careful search would bring many more to light. It might be supposed that the character of the language employed would be sufficient to differentiate the work of Omar at any rate from that of poets writing two or three centuries after his time, but, as observed by

Chodzko, the literary Persian of 800 years ago differs singularly little from that now in use. Again, if, as has been supposed, there were anything exceptional in Omar's poetry, it might be possible to identify it by internal evidence; but the fact is that all Persian poetry runs very much in grooves, and Omar's is no exception. The poetry of rebellion and revolt from orthodox opinions, which is supposed to be peculiar to him, may be traced in the works of his predecessor Avicenna, as well as in those of Afzul Káshi, and others of his successors. For these reasons I have not excluded any quatrains on account of their being ascribed to other writers as well as Omar. So long as I find fair MS. authority for such quatrains, I include them in the text, not because I am sure Omar wrote them, but because it is just as likely they were written by him as by the other claimants. Of course a text formed on these principles cannot be a very satisfactory one, but, on the other hand, it is useless for an editor to pretend to greater certainty than the case admits of.

For the authorities on which the text is based, reference must be made to my Persian edition.

III.

Omar is a poet who can hardly be translated satisfactorily otherwise than in verse. Prose does well enough for narrative or didactic poetry, where the main things to be reproduced are the matter and substance; but it is plainly contra-indicated in the case of poetry like Omar's,

where the matter is little else than "the commonplaces of the lyric ode and the tragic chorus," and where nearly the whole charm consists in the style and the manner, the grace of the expression, and the melody of the versification. A literal prose version of such poetry must needs be unsatisfactory, because it studiously ignores the chief points in which the attractiveness of the original consists, and deliberately renounces all attempts to reproduce them.

In deciding on the form to be taken by a new translation of Omar, the fact of the existence of a previous verse translation of universally acknowledged merit ought not, of course, to be left out of account. The successor of a translator like Mr. Fitzgerald, who ventures to write verse, and especially verse of the metre which he has handled with such success, cannot help feeling at almost every step that he is provoking comparisons very much to his own disadvantage. But I do not think this consideration ought to deter him from using the vehicle which everything else indicates as the proper one.

As regards metre, there is no doubt that the quatrain of ten-syllable lines, which has been tried by Hammer, Bicknell, and others, and has been raised by Mr. Fitzgerald almost to the rank of a recognised English metre, is the best representative of the *Rub'd'i*. It fairly satisfies Conington's canon, viz., that there ought to be some degree of metrical conformity between the measure of the original and that of the translation, for though it does not exactly correspond with the *Rub'd'i*, it very clearly suggests it. In particular, it copies what is

perhaps the most marked feature of the *Rubā'ī*,—the interlinking of the four lines by the repetition in the fourth line of the rhyme of the first and second. Mr. Swinburne's modification of this metre, in which the rhyme is carried on from one quatrain to the next, is not applicable to poems like Omar's, each of which is isolated in sense from the context. Alexandrines would of course correspond, more nearly than decasyllables, with *Rubā'ī* lines in number of syllables, and they have been extensively used by Bodenstedt and other German translators of *Rubā'īs*, but whatever may be the case in German, they are apt to read very heavily in English, even when constructed by skilful verse-makers, and an inferior workman can hardly hope to manage them with anything like success. The shorter length of the decasyllable line is not altogether a disadvantage to the translator. Owing to the large number of monosyllables in English, it is generally adequate to hold the contents of a Persian line a syllable or two longer; and a line erring, if at all, on the side of brevity, has at any rate the advantage of obliging the translator to eschew modern diffuseness, and of making him try to copy the “classical parsimony,” the archaic terseness and condensation of the original.

The poet Cowper has a remark on translation from Latin which is eminently true also of translation from Persian. He says, “That is epigrammatic and witty in Latin which would be perfectly insipid in English. . . . If a Latin poem is neat, elegant, and musical, it is enough, but English readers are not so easily satisfied.”

Much of Omar's matter, when literally translated, seems very trite and commonplace, many of the "conceits," of which he is so fond, very frigid, and even his peculiar grotesque humour often loses its savour in an English replica. The translator is often tempted to elevate a too grovelling sentiment, to "sharpen a point" here and there, to trick out a commonplace with some borrowed modern embellishment. But this temptation is one to be resisted as far as possible. According to the *Hadîs*, "the business of a messenger is simply to deliver his message," and he must not shrink from displaying the naked truth. A translator who writes in verse must of course claim the liberty of altering the form of the expression over and over again, but the substituted expressions ought to be in keeping with the author's style, and on the same plane of sentiment as his. It is beyond the province of a translator to attempt the task of painting the lily. But it is easier to lay down correct principles of translation than to observe them unswervingly in one's practice.

IV.

As regards subject-matter, Omar's quatrains may be classed under the following six heads:—

I. Complaints of "the wheel of heaven," or fate, of the world's injustice, of the loss of friends, of man's limited faculties and destinies.

II. Satires on the hypocrisy of the "unco' guid," the impiety of the pious, the ignorance of the learned, and the untowardness of his own generation.

III. Love-poems on the sorrows of separation and the joys of reunion with the beloved, earthly or spiritual.

IV. Poems in praise of spring, gardens, and flowers.

V. Irreligious and antinomian utterances, charging the sins of the creature to the account of the Creator, scoffing at the Prophet's Paradise and Hell, singing the praises of wine and pleasure—preaching *ad nauseam*, “Eat and drink (especially drink), for to-morrow ye die.”

VI. Addresses to the Deity, now in the ordinary language of devotion, bewailing sins and imploring pardon, now in mystical phraseology, craving deliverance from “self,” and union with the “Truth,” or Deity, as conceived by the Mystics.

The “complaints” may obviously be connected with the known facts of the poet’s life, by supposing them to have been prompted by the persecution to which he was subjected on account of his opinions. His remarks on the Houris and other sacred subjects raised such a feeling against him that at one time his life was in danger, and the wonder is that he escaped at all in a city like Nishapúr, where the *odium theologicum* raged so fiercely as to occasion a sanguinary civil war. In the year 489 A.H., as we learn from Ibn al Athir,¹ the orthodox banded themselves together under the leadership of Abul Kasim and Muhammad, the chiefs of the Hanefites and the Shafeites, in order to exterminate the Kerrámians or Anthropomorphist heretics, and succeeded in putting many of them to death, and in destroying all their establishments. It may be also that after the death of his patron

¹ See Defrémy, “Recherches sur le Règne de Barkiárok,” p. 51.

Nizám ul Mulk, Omar lost his stipend and was reduced to poverty.

The satires probably owed their origin to the same cause. *Rien ne soulage comme la rhétorique.*

The love-poems are samples of a class of compositions much commoner in later poets than in Omar. Most of them probably bear a mystical meaning, for I doubt if Omar was a person very susceptible of the tender passion. He speaks with appreciation of "tulip cheeks" and "cypress forms," but apparently recognises no attractions of a higher order in his fair friends.

The poems in praise of scenery, again, offer a strong contrast to modern treatment of the same theme. The only aspects of Nature noticed by Omar are such as affect the senses agreeably—the bright flowers, the song of the nightingale, the grassy bank of the stream, and the shady gardens associated in his mind with his convivial parties. The geographer translated by Sir W. Ouseley says of Nishapúr, "The city is watered by a subterranean canal, which is conveyed to the fields and gardens, and there is a considerable stream that waters the city and the villages about it—this stream is named *Saka*. In all the province of Khorásan there is not any city larger than Nishapúr, nor any blessed with a more pure and temperate air."

But it is in the antinomian quatrains and in the pious aspirations that the most remarkable and characteristic features of Omar's poetry are exhibited. The glaring contrast between these two classes of his poetry has led his readers to take very opposite views of him, according

as they looked at one or the other side of the shield. European critics, like his contemporaries, mostly consider him an infidel and a voluptuary "of like mind with Sardanapalus." On the other hand, the Sufis have contrived to affix mystical and devotional meanings even to his most Epicurean quatrains, and this method of interpretation is nowadays as universally accepted in Persia and India as the mystical interpretation of the Canticles is in Europe. But neither of these views can be accepted in its entirety. Even if the Sufi symbolism had been definitely formulated as early as Omar's time, which is very doubtful, common sense would forbid us to force a devotional meaning on the palpably Epicurean quatrains; and, on the other hand, unless we are prepared to throw over the authority of all the MSS., including the most ancient ones, we must reckon with the obviously mystical and devotional quatrains. The essential contradiction in the tone and temper of these two sections of Omar's poetry cannot be glossed over, but imperatively calls for explanation.

His poems were obviously not all written at one period of his life, but from time to time, just as circumstance and mood suggested, and under the influence of the thoughts, passions, and desires which happened to be uppermost at the moment. It may be that the irreligious and Epicurean quatrains were written in youth, and the devotional only in his riper years. But this hypothesis seems to be disproved by Sharastáni's account of him, which is quite silent as to any such conversion or change of sentiment on his part, and also by the fact that he

describes himself from first to last as a halter between two opinions, and as a backslider in his practice.

If his poems be considered not in the abstract, but in the light of history, taking into account his mental pedigree and his intellectual surroundings, a more plausible explanation of his inconsistencies readily presents itself. In his youth, as we know, he sat at the feet of the Sunni theologian Imám Muaffik, and he was then no doubt thoroughly indoctrinated with the great Semitic conception of the One God, or, to use the expressive term of Muhammadan theology, "the Only Real Agent." To minds dominated by the overwhelming sense of Almighty Power, everywhere present and working, there seems no room for Nature, or human will, or Iblis,¹ or any other Ahriman whatsoever, to take the responsibility of all the evils in the world, the storms and the earthquakes, the Borgias and the Catilines: the "Only Real Agent" has to answer for all. In the most ancient document of Semitic religious speculation now extant, the Book of Job, we find expostulations of the boldest character addressed to Jehovah for permitting a righteous man to be stricken with unmerited misfortunes, though the writer ultimately concludes in a spirit of pious agnosticism and resignation to the inscrutable dispensations of Omnipotence. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, again, the same problems are handled, but in a somewhat different temper. The "weary king Ecclesiast" remarks that there is one event to all, to him that sacri-

¹ Iblis protests against being taken as the originator of evil. See Masnavi, p. 95.

ficeth and him that sacrificeth not—that injustice and wrong seem eternally triumphant, that Jehovah has made things crooked, and none can make them straight; and concludes now in favour of a sober "*carpe diem*" philosophy, now in favour of a devout "fear of the Lord." Of course the manner in which the serious Hebrew handles these matters is very different from the levity and flippancy of the volatile Persian, but it can hardly be denied that the Ecclesiast and Omar resemble one another in the double and contradictory nature of their practical conclusions.

No sooner was Islam established than the same problem of the existence of evil in the handiwork of the Almighty Author and Governor of all began to trouble the Moslem theologians, and by their elaboration of the doctrine of Predestination they managed to aggravate its difficulties. One of the chief "roots" of their discussions was how to reconcile the Divine justice and benevolence with the Divine prescience,—the predestination of some vessels to honour, and others to dishonour,—the pre-ordination of all things by a kind of mechanical necessity, leaving no possibility of the occurrence of any events except those which actually do occur. The consideration of one corollary of a similar doctrine moved the pious and gentle Cowper to use language of indignant dissent; and there is high theological authority for the view that it is calculated "to thrust some into desperation and wretchedness of most unclean living," while to those who persuade themselves they are of the number of "the elect," "it is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable

comfort.”¹ Omar is constantly dwelling on this doctrine, and he seems to be affected by it in the double way here described.

Other influences which acted on Omar must not be left out of account. Born as he was in Khorásan, “the focus of Persian culture,” he was no doubt familiar with the speculations of the Moslem philosophers, Alkindi, Alfárábi, and Avicenna, the last of whom he may possibly have seen.¹ And though he was not himself a Sufi, in the sense of being affiliated to any of the Sufi orders, he can hardly have been unaffected by the mysticism of which his predecessor in *Rubá’i* writing, Abu Sa’id bin Abul Khair, his patron Nizám ul Mulk, and his distinguished countryman Imám Ghazzáli were all strong adherents. His philosophical studies would naturally stimulate his sceptical and irreligious dispositions, while his mystical leanings would operate mainly in the contrary direction.

If this explanation of the inconsistencies in his poetry be correct, it is obvious that the parallel often sought to be traced between him and Lucretius has no existence. Whatever he was, he was not an Atheist. To him, as to other Muhammadans of his time, to deny the existence of the Deity would seem to be tantamount to denying the existence of the world and of himself. And the conception of “laws of Nature” was also one quite foreign to his habits of thought. As Deutsch says, “To a Muslim, Nature is nothing but that which has been begotten, and is ruled absolutely by One Absolute Power.”

¹ 17th Article of Religion.

² Avicenna died in 428 A.H.

Hammar compares him to Voltaire, but in reality he is a Voltaire and something more. He has much of Voltaire's flippancy and irreverence. His treatment of the Prophet's Paradise is altogether in Voltaire's manner; and his insistence on the all-importance of kindness and charity recalls the better side of Voltaire's character, viz., his kindness to Calas, and the other victims of ecclesiastical persecution. But Omar also possessed, what Voltaire did not, strong religious emotions, which at times overrode his rationalism, and found expression in those devotional and mystical quatrains which offer such a strong contrast to the rest of his poetry.



QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

Alif.

1. (3).

'Tis but a day we sojourn here below,
And all the gain we get is grief and woe,
And then, leaving life's riddles all unsolved,
And burdened with regrets, we have to go.

2. (4).

Khaja ! grant one request, and only one,
Wish me God-speed, and get your preaching done ;
I walk aright, 'tis you who see awry ;
Go ! mend your sight, and leave Khayyám alone.

3. (5).

Arise ! and come, and of thy courtesy
Relieve my weary heart's perplexity,
And fill my goblet, so that I may drink,
Or ere they make their goblets out of me.

4. (6).

When I am dead, with wine my body lave,
For obit chant a bacchanalian stave,
And, if you need me at the day of doom,
Beneath the tavern threshold seek my grave.

5. (7).

Since no one can assure thee of the morrow,
Rejoice thy heart to-day, and banish sorrow
With moonbright wine, fair moon, for heaven's moon
Will look for us in vain on many a morrow.

6. (9.)

In Allah's name, say, wherefore set the wise
Their hearts upon this house of vanities?
Whene'er they think to rest them from their toils,
Death takes them by the hand, and says, "Arise."

7. (10.)

Men say the Koran holds all heavenly lore,
But on its pages seldom care to pore;
The lucid lines engraven on the bowl,—
That is the text they dwell on evermore.

8. (11.)

Blame not the drunkards, you who wine eschew;
Had I but grace, I would abstain like you;
And mark me, vaunting zealot, you commit
A hundredfold worse sins than drunkards do.

9. (12.)

What though 'tis fair to view, this form of man,
I know not why the Heavenly Artisan
Hath set these tulip cheeks and cypress forms
To deck the mournful halls of earth's divan.

Be.

10. (17.)

So many cups of wine will I consume,
Its bouquet shall exhale from out my tomb,
And every one that passes by shall halt,
And reel and stagger with that mighty fume.

11. (22.)

Here in this tavern haunt I make my lair,
Pawning for wine, heart, soul, and all I wear,
Without a hope of bliss or fear of bale,
Rapt above water, earth, and fire, and air.

12. (23.)

Quoth fish to duck, " 'Twill be a sad affair
If this brook leaves its channel dry and bare ;'"
To whom the duck, " When I am dead and roasted,
The brook may mirage prove for aught I care."

¶.

13. (24.)

FROM doubt to clear assurance is a breath,
A breath from infidelity to faith ;
 Oh, precious breath ! enjoy it while you may,
'Tis all that life can give, and then comes death.

14. (25.)

Ah ! wheel of heaven, to tyranny inclined,
'Twas e'er your wont to show yourself unkind ;
 And, cruel earth, if they should cleave your breast,
What store of buried jewels they would find !

15. (26.)

My life lasts but a day or two, and fast
Sweeps by, like torrent stream or desert blast,
 Howbeit, of two days I take no heed,—
The day that's future, and the day that's past.

16. (28.)

Now that with youth and joy my age is rife,
I quaff enchanting wine, and list to fife;
Chide not at wine for all its bitter taste,
Its bitterness sorts well with human life !

17. (29.)

O soul ! whose lot it is to bleed with pain,
And daily change of fortune to sustain,
Into this body wherefore didst thou come,
Seeing thou must so soon go forth again ?

18. (30.)

To-day is thine to spend, but not to-morrow,
Counting on morrows breedeth naught but sorrow ;
Oh ! squander not this breath that Heaven hath lent
thee,
Nor make too sure another breath to borrow !

19. (31.)

'Tis labour lost thus to all doors to crawl ;
Take thy good fortune, and thy bad withal ;
Know for a surety each must play his game,
As from the box of fate the dice may fall.

20. (32.)

This jug did once, like me, love's sorrows taste,
And bonds of beauty's tresses once embraced,
 This handle, which you see upon its side,
Has many a time twined round a slender waist !

21. (33.)

Days changed to nights, ere you were born, or I,
And on its business ever rolled the sky ;
 See you tread gently on this dust, perchance
'Twas once the apple of some beauty's eye.

22. (34.)

Pagodas, just as mosques, are homes of prayer,
'Tis prayer that church-bells chime unto the air ;
 Yea, Church and Ka'ba, Rosary and Cross,
Are all but divers tongues of world-wide prayer.

23. (35.)

'Twas writ at first, whatever was to be,
By pen unheeding bliss or misery,
 Yea, writ upon the tablet once for all ;
To murmur or resist is vanity.

24. (42.)

Behold these cups! can He who deigned to make
them,
In wanton freak let ruin overtake them,
So many shapely feet and hands and heads,—
What love drives Him to make, what wrath to break
them?

25. (43.)

Death's terrors spring from baseless phantasy,
Death yields the tree of immortality ;
Since 'Isa breathed new life into my soul,
Eternal death has washed its hands of me !

26. (45.)

Fate will not bend to humour man's caprice,
So vaunt not human powers, but hold your peace ;
Here must we stay, weighed down with grief for
this,
That we were born so late, so soon decease.

27. (46.)

Khayyam! why weep you that your life is bad ?
What boots it thus to mourn ? Rather be glad.
He that sins not can make no claim to mercy ;
Mercy was made for sinners—be not sad.

28. (47.)

All mortal ken is bounded by the veil,
To see beyond man's sight is all too frail ;
 Yea ! earth's dark bosom is his only home ;—
Alas ! 'twere long to tell the doleful tale.

28. (49.)

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule ;
 But they who master Allah's mysteries,
Sow not this empty chaff their hearts to fool.

29. (51.)

I dreamt a sage said, " Wherfore life consume
In sleep ? Can sleep make pleasure's roses bloom ?
 Forgather not with Death's twin-brother, Sleep ;
Thou wilt have sleep enough within thy tomb ! "

30. (52.)

If the heart knew life's secrets here below,
At death 'twould know God's secrets too, I trow ;
 But, if you know naught here, while still yourself,
To-morrow, stripped of self, what can you know ?

31. (53.)

On that dread day when wrath shall rend the sky,
 And darkness dim the bright stars' galaxy,
 I'll seize the Loved One by His skirt, and cry,
 "Why hast Thou doomed these guiltless ones to die?"

32. (54.)

To knaves Thy secret we must not confide,
 To comprehend it is to fools denied,
 See then to what hard case Thou doomest men,
 Our hopes from one and all perforce we hide.

33. (57.)

Bring wine! my heart with dancing spirits teems;
 Wake! fortune's waking is as fleeting dreams;
 Quicksilver-like our days are swift of foot,
 And youthful fire subsides like torrent streams.

34. (59.)

My law it is in pleasure's paths to stray,
 My creed to shun the theologic fray;
 I wedded Luck, and offered her a dower,
 She said, "I want none, so thy heart be gay."

35. (60.)

From mosque an outcast, and to church a foe,
Allah ! of what clay didst thou form me so ?

Like sceptic monk or ugly courtesan,
No hopes have I above, no joys below.

36. (62.)

Yon turf, fringing the margin of the stream,
As down upon a cherub's lip might seem,

Or growth from dust of buried tulip cheeks ;
Tread not that turf with scorn or light esteem !

37. (63.)

Hearts with the light of love illumined well,
Whether in mosque or synagogue they dwell,

Have *their* names written in the book of love,
Unvexed by hopes of heaven or fears of hell.

38. (66.)

In drinking thus it is not my design
To riot, or transgress the law divine,

No ! to attain unconsciousness of self
Is the sole cause I drink me drunk with wine.

39. (67.)

Drunkards are doomed to hell, so men declare ;
Believe it not, 'tis but a foolish scare ;
 Heaven will be empty as this hand of mine,
If none who love good drink find entrance there.

40. (70.)

What is the world ? A caravanserai,
A pied pavilion of night and day,
 A feast whereat a thousand Jamsheds sat,
A couch whereon a thousand Bahrams lay.

41. (72.)

In these proud halls, where Bahram once held sway,
The wild roes drop their young and tigers stray ;
 And that imperial hunter in his turn
To the great hunter Death is fallen a prey.

42. (73.)

Down fall the tears from skies enwrapt in gloom,
Without this drink the flowers could never bloom !
 As now these flowers afford delight to me,
So shall my dust yield flowers,—God knows for whom.

43. (79.)

Some wine, a Houri maid for company,
A garden by a stream, with minstrelsy ;—
Toil not to find a better Paradise,
If other Paradise indeed there be !

44. (82.)

Thy body is a tent, which for a space
Doth the pure soul with royal presence grace ;
When he departs, comes the tent-pitcher Death,
Strikes it, and moves to a new halting-place.

45. (83.)

Khayyám, who long time tents of science wrought,
Was burnt by trouble, and to ruin brought ;
Fate's shears have cut his thread of life in twain,
And Death, the broker, sold him off for naught.

46. (84.)

In the sweet spring a grassy bank I sought,
And thither wine and a fair Houri brought ;
And, though the people call me graceless dog,
Gave not to Paradise another thought !

47. (87.)

Make haste ! soon must you quit this life below,
And pass the veil, and Allah's secrets know ;

 Make haste to take your pleasure while you may,
You wot not whence you come, nor whither go.

48. (89.)

To chant wine's praises is my daily task,
I live encompassed by cup, bowl, and flask ;

 Zealot ! if reason be thy guide, then know
That guide of wine doth ofttimes guidance ask.

49. (90.)

O men of morals ! why do ye defame
And thus misjudge me ? I am not to blame.

 Save weakness for the grape and Houri's charms,
What sins of mine can any of ye name ?

50. (92.)

Skies like a zone our weary lives enclose,["]
And from our tear-stained eyes a Jihun flows ;

 Hell is a fire enkindled of our griefs ;
Heaven but a dream of respite from our woes.

51. (93.)

I drown in sin—show me Thy clemency !
My soul is dark—make me Thy light to see !

A heaven that must be earned by painful works
I call a wage, not a gift fair and free.

52. (94.)

Did He who made me fashion me for hell,
Or destine me for heaven ? I cannot tell.
Yet will I not renounce cup, lute, and love,
Nor earthly cash for heavenly credit sell.

53. (96.)

The good and evil with man's nature blent,
The weal and woe that Heaven's decrees have sent,
Impute them not to motions of the skies,—
Skies than thyself ten times more impotent.

54. (99.)

He in whose bosom wisdom's seed is sown,
To waste a single day is never known ;
Either he strives to work great Allah's will,
Or else exalts the cup, and works his own.

55. (100.)

When Allah mixed my clay, He knew full well
My future acts, and could each one foretell ;
Nothing without His fiat can I do ;
Is it then just to punish me in hell ?

56. (102.)

If grace be grace and Allah gracious be,
Adam from Paradise why banished He ?
Grace to poor sinners shown is grace indeed ;
In grace hard earned by works no grace I see.

57. (103.)

Dame Fortune's smiles are full of guile, beware !
Her scimitar is sharp to smite, take care !
If e'er she drop a sweetmeat in thy mouth,
'Tis poisonous,—to swallow it forbear !

58. (104.)

Where'er you see a rose or tulip bed,
Know that a mighty monarch's blood was shed ;
And where the violet rears her purple tuft,
Be sure a black-moled girl doth rest her head.

59. (105.)

Wine is a melting ruby, cup its mine ;
Cup is the body and the soul is wine ;
These goblets smile with wine of ruddy hue,
Like tears, that blood of wounded hearts enshrine.

60. (107.)

Drink wine ! long must you sleep within the tomb,
Without a friend, or wife to cheer your gloom ;
Hear what I say, and tell it not again,
“Never again can withered tulips bloom.”

61. (108.)

They preach how sweet those Houri brides will be,
But I say wine is sweeter—taste and see !
Hold fast this cash, and let that credit go,
And shun the din of empty drums like me.

62. (109.)

Once and again my soul did me implore,
To teach her, if I might, the heavenly lore ;
I bade her learn the *Alif* well by heart.
Who knows that letter well need learn no more.

63. (110.)

I came not hither of my own free-will,
And go against my wish, a puppet still ;
Cupbearer ! gird thy loins, and fetch some wine ;
To purge the world's despite, my goblet fill.

64. (112.)

Sweet is the breath of spring to rose's face,
And thy sweet face adds charm to this fair place ;
To-day is sweet, but yesterday is sad,
And sad all mention of its parted grace.

65. (113.)

To-night pour wine, and sing a dulcet air,
And I upon thy lips will hang, O fair ;
Yea, pour some wine as rosy as thy cheeks,
My mind is troubled like thy ruffled hair.

66. (114.)

Pen, tablet, heaven and hell I looked to see
Above the skies from all eternity ;
At last the master-sage instructed me,
" Pen, tablet, heaven and hell are all in thee."

67. (115.)

The fruit of certitude *he* cannot pluck,
 The path that leads thereto who never struck,
 Nor ever shook the bough with strenuous hand ;
 To-day is lost ; hope for to-morrow's luck.

68. (116.)

Now spring-tide showers its foison on the land,
 And lively hearts wend forth, a joyous band,
 For 'Isa's breath wakes the dead earth to life,
 And trees gleam white with flowers, like Musa's hand.

69. (117.)

Alas for that cold heart, which never glows
 With love, nor e'er that charming madness knows ;
 The days misspent with no redeeming love ;—
 No days are wasted half so much as those !

70. (126.)

The Master did himself these vessels frame,
 Why should he cast them out to scorn and shame ?
 If he has made them well, why should he break
 them ?
 Yea, though he marred them, *they* are not to blame.

Khe.

71. (134.)

When life is spent, what's Balkh or Nishapore ?
What sweet or bitter, when the cup runs o'er ?

Come drink ! full many a moon will wax and wane
In times to come, when we are here no more.

Ḍal.

72. (136.)

Life's caravan is hastening on its way;
Brood not on troubles of the coming day,
But fill the wine-cup, ere sweet night be gone,
And snatch a pleasant moment, while you may.

73. (137.)

He, who the world's foundations erst did lay,
Doth bruise full many a bosom day by day,
And many a ruby lip and musky tress
Doth coffin in the earth, and shroud with clay.

74. (139.)

Comrades! I pray you, physic me with wine,
Make this wan amber face like rubies shine,
And, if I die, use wine to wash my corpse,
And frame my coffin out of planks of vine!

75. (140.)

When Allah yoked the coursers of the sun,
And launched the Pleiades their race to run,
 My lot was fixed in fate's high chancery ;
Then why blame me for wrong that fate has done ?

76. (142.)

Whilom, ere youth's conceit had waned, methought
Answers to all life's problems I had wrought ;
 But now, grown old and wise, too late I see
My life is spent, and all my lore is naught.

77. (145.)

He brought me hither, and I felt surprise,
From life I gather but a dark surmise,
 I go against my will ;—thus, why I come,
Why live, why go, are all dark mysteries.

78. (147.)

They at whose lore the whole world stands amazed,
Whose high thoughts, like Borák, to heaven are
 raised,
Strive to know Thee in vain, and like heaven's
 wheel
Their heads are turning, and their brains are dazed.

79. (151.)

The sages who have compassed sea and land,
Their secret to search out, and understand,—

My mind misgives me if they ever solve
The scheme on which this universe is planned.

152.

Ah ! wealth takes wings, and leaves our hands all
bare,

And death's rough hands delight our hearts to tear ;

And from the nether world let none escape,
To bring us tidings of the pilgrims there.

80. (154.)

The wheel on high, still busied with despite,
Will ne'er unloose a wretch from his sad plight ;

But when it lights upon a smitten heart,
Straightway essays another blow to smite.

81. (155.)

Now is the volume of my youth outworn,
And all my spring-tide blossoms rent and torn.

Ah, bird of youth ! I marked not when you came,
Nor when you fled, and left me thus forlorn.

82. (156.)

These fools, by dint of ignorance most crass,
Think they in wisdom all mankind surpass ;
And glibly do they damn as infidel,
Whoever is not, like themselves, an ass.

83. (159.)

Till the Friend pours his wine to glad my heart,
No kisses to my face will heaven impart :
They say, " Repent in time ; " but how repent,
Ere Allah's grace hath softened my hard heart ?

84. (160.)

When I am dead, take me and grind me small,
So that I be a warning unto all,
And knead me into clay with wine, and then
Use me to stop the wine-jar's mouth withal.

85. (161.)

What though the sky with its blue canopy
Doth close us in so that we cannot see,
In the etern Cupbearer's wine, methinks,
There float a myriad bubbles like to me.

86. (165.)

Needs must the tavern-haunter bathe in wine,
For none can make a tarnished name to shine ;
Go ! bring me wine, for none can now restore
Its pristine sheen to this soiled robe of mine.

87. (168.)

Let him rejoice who has a loaf of bread,
A little nest wherein to lay his head,
Is slave to none, and no man slaves for him,—
In truth his lot is wondrous well bested.

88. (169.)

What adds my service to Thy majesty ?
Or how can sin of mine dishonour Thee ?
O pardon, then, and punish not, I know
Thou'rt slow to wrath, and prone to clemency.

89. (170.)

Hands, such as mine, that handle bowls of wine,
'Twere shame to book and pulpit to confine ;
Zealot ! thou'rt dry, and I am moist with drink,
Yea, far too moist to catch that fire of thine !

90. (172.)

For ever may my hands on wine be stayed,
And my heart pant for some fair Houri maid !

They say, " May Allah aid thee to repent ! "
Repent I could not, e'en with Allah's aid !

91. (174.)

To-day how sweetly breathes the temperate air,
The rains have newly laved the parched parterre ;
And Bulbuls cry in notes of ecstasy,
" Thou too, O pallid rose, our wine must share . "

92. (175.)

Ere you succumb to shocks of mortal pain,
The rosy grape-juice from your wine-cup drain.

You are not gold, that, hidden in the earth,
Your friends should care to dig you up again !

93. (176.)

My coming brought no profit to the sky,
Nor does my going swell its majesty ;

Coming and going put me to a stand,
Ear never heard their wherefore nor their why.

94. (177.)

The heavenly Sage, whose wit exceeds compare,
Counteth each vein, and numbereth every hair ;
Men you may cheat by hypocritic arts,
But how cheat Him to whom all hearts are bare ?

95. (178.)

Ah ! wine lends wings to many a weary wight,
And beauty spots to ladies' faces bright ;
All Ramazan I have not drunk a drop,
Thrice welcome then, O Bairani's blessed night !

96. (180.)

To prayer and fasting when my heart inclined,
All my desire I surely hoped to find ;
Alas ! my purity is stained with wine,
My prayers are wasted like a breath of wind.

97. (183.)

Why spend life in vainglorious essay
All Being and Not-being to survey ?
Since Death is ever pressing at your heels,
'Tis best to drink or dream your life away.

98. (184.)

Some hanker after that vain phantasy
Of Houris, feigned in Paradise to be ;
But, when the veil is lifted, they will find
How far they are from Thee, how far from Thee !

99. (185.)

In Paradise, they tell us, Houris dwell,
And fountains run with wine and oxymel :
If these be lawful in the world to come,
Surely 'tis right to love them here as well.

100. (186.)

A draught of wine would make a mountain dance,
Base is the churl who looks at wine askance ;
Wine is a soul our bodies to inspire,
A truce to this vain talk of temperance !

101. (187.)

Oft doth my soul her prisoned state bemoan,
Her earth-born comate she would fain disown,
And quit, did not the stirrup of the law
Upbear her foot from dashing on the stone.

102. (190.)

What sage the eternal tangle e'er unravelled,
Or one short step beyond his nature travelled ?

From pupils to the masters turn your eyes,
And see, each mother's son alike is gravelled.

103. (191.)

Crave not of worldly sweets to take your fill,
Nor wait on turns of fortune, good or ill ;

Be of light heart, as are the skies above,
They roll their destined rounds, and then lie still.

104. (192.)

What eye can pierce the veil of God's decrees,
Or read the riddle of earth's destinies ?

Pondered have I for years threescore and ten,
But still am baffled by these mysteries.

105. (193.)

They say, when the last trump shall sound its knell,
The Friend will sternly judge, and doom to hell.

Can aught but good from perfect goodness come ?
Compose your trembling hearts, 'twill all be well.

106. (194.)

Drink wine to root up metaphysic weeds,
And tangle of the two-and-seventy creeds ;
Do not forswear that wondrous alchemy,
'Twill turn to gold, and cure a thousand needs.

107. (195.)

Though drink is wrong, take care with whom you
drink,
And who you are that drink, and what you drink ;
And drink at will, for, these three points observed,
Who but the very wise can ever drink ?

108. (196.)

To drain a gallon beaker I design,
Yea, two great beakers, brimmed with richest wine ;
Old faith and reason thrice will I divorce,
Then take to wife the daughter of the vine.

109. (197.)

True I drink wine, like every man of sense,
For I know Allah will not take offence ;
Before time was, He knew that I should drink,
And who am I to thwart His prescience ?

110. (200.)

When false dawn streaks the east with cold grey line,
Pour in your cups the pure blood of the vine ;

The truth, they say, tastes bitter in the mouth,
This is a token that the "Truth" is wine.

111. (201.)

Now is the time earth decks her greenest bowers,
And trees, like Musa's hand, grow white with flowers !

As 'twere at 'Isa's breath the plants revive,
While clouds brim o'er, like tearful eyes, with showers.

112. (203.)

The showers of grape-juice, which cupbearers pour,
Quench fires of grief in many a sad heart's core ;

Praise be to Allah, who hath sent this balm
To heal sore hearts, and spirits' health restore !

113. (204.)

Can alien Pharisees Thy kindness tell,
Like us, Thy intimates, who nigh Thee dwell ?

Thou say'st, "All sinners will I burn with fire."
Say that to strangers, we know Thee too well.

114. (205.)

O comrades dear, when hither ye repair
In times to come, communion sweet to share,
While the cupbearer pours your old Magh wine,
Call poor Khayyám to mind, and breathe a prayer.

115. (206.)

For me heaven's sphere no music ever made,
Nor yet with soothing voice my fears allayed ;
If e'er I found brief respite from my woes,
Back to woe's thrall I was at once betrayed.

116. (207.)

Sooner with half a loaf contented be,
And water from a broken crock, like me,
Than lord it over one poor fellow-man,
Or to another bow the vassal knee.

117. (208.)

While Moon and Venus in the sky shall dwell,
None shall see aught red grape-juice to excel :
O foolish publicans, what can you buy
One half so precious as the goods you sell ?

118. (209.)

They who endowed with wit and strength of brain,
As Guiding Lights men's homage did obtain,
Not even they emerged from this dark night,
But told their dreams, and fell asleep again.

119. (210.)

At dawn, when dews bedeck the tulip's face,
And violets their heavy heads abase,
I love to see the roses' folded buds,
With petals closed against the winds' disgrace.

120. (212.)

Ah ! thou hast snared this head, though white as snow,
Which oft has vowed the wine-cup to forego ;
And wrecked the mansion long resolve did build,
And rent the vesture penitence did sew !

121. (213.)

I am not one whom Death doth much dismay,
Life's terrors all Death's terrors far outweigh ;
This life, that Heaven hath lent me for a while,
I will pay back, when it is time to pay.

122. (214.)

The stars, who dwell on heaven's exalted stage,
Baffle the wise diviners of our age;

Take heed, hold fast the rope of mother wit,
These augurs all mistrust their own presage.

123. (216.)

Slaves of vain wisdom and philosophy,
Who toil at Being and Nonentity,

Parching your brains till they are like dry grapes,
Be wise in time, and drink grape-juice, like me !

124. (217.)

Sense, seeking happiness, bids us pursue
All present joys, and present griefs eschew ;

She says, we are not like the meadow grass,
Which, when they mow it down, springs up anew.

125. (219.)

My comrades all are gone ; Death, deadly foe,
Hath caught them one by one, and trampled low ;

They shared life's feast, and drank its wine with me,
But lost their heads, and dropped a while ago.

126. (221.)

When the great Founder moulded me of old,
He mixed much baser metal with my gold ;
 Better or fairer I can never be
Than when I issued from his heavenly mould.

127. (222.)

The joyous souls who quaff potations deep,
And saints who in the mosque sad vigils keep,
 Are lost at sea alike, and find no shore,
ONE only wakes, all others are asleep.

128. (224.)

Small gains to learning on this earth accrue,
They pluck life's fruitage, learning who eschew ;
 Take pattern by the fools who learning shun,
And then perchance shall fortune smile on you.

129. (234.)

Comrades ! when e'er ye meet together here,
Recall your friend to mind, and drop a tear ;
 And when the circling wine-cups reach his seat,
Let one be overturned his dust to cheer.

180. (237.)

Many have come, and run their eager race,
Striving for pleasures, luxuries, or place,
And quaffed their wine, and now all silent lie,
Enfolded in their parent earth's embrace.

Re.

131. (240.)

HEAVEN multiplies our sorrows day by day,
And grants no joys it does not take away ;
If those unborn could know the ills we bear,
What think you, would they rather come or stay ?

132. (241.)

Why ponder thus the future to foresee,
And jade thy brain to vain perplexity ?
Cast off thy care, leave Allah's plans to him,
He formed them all without consulting thee.

133. (242.)

The tenants of the tombs to dust decay,
Nescient of self, and all beside are they ;
Their crumbling atoms float about the world,
Like mirage clouds, until the judgment-day.

134. (243.)

O soul ! lay up all earthly goods in store,
Thy mead with pleasure's flowerets spangle o'er ;
And know 'tis all as dew, that decks the flowers
For one short night, and then is seen no more !

135. (244.)

Heed not the Sunna, nor the law divine ;
If to the poor his portion you assign,
And never injure one, nor yet abuse,
I guarantee you heaven, and now some wine !

136. (247.)

The world is baffled in its search for Thee,
Wealth cannot find Thee, no, nor poverty ;
All speak of Thee, but none have ears to hear,
Thou'rt near to all, but none have eyes to see.

137. (248.)

Take care you never hold a drinking bout
With an ill-tempered, ill-conditioned lout ;
He'll make a vile disturbance all night long,
And vile apologies next day, no doubt.

138. (249.)

The starry aspects are not all benign ;
Why toil then after vain desires, and pine
To lade thyself with load of fortune's boons,
Only to drop it with this life of thine ?

139. (252.)

I saw a busy potter by the way
Kneading with might and main a lump of clay;
And, lo ! the clay cried, " Use me tenderly,
I was a man myself but yesterday ! "

140. (254.)

Deep in the rondure of the heavenly blue,
There is a cup, concealed from mortals' view,
Which all must drink in turn ; O sigh not then,
But drink it boldly, when it comes to you !

Z&e.

141. (257.)

O HEART! this world is but a fleeting show,
Why should its empty griefs distress thee so?

Bow down, and bear thy fate, the eternal pen
Will not unwrite its roll for thee, I trow!

142. (258.)

Who e'er returned of all that went before,
To tell of that long road they travel o'er?

Leave naught undone of what you have to do,
For when you go, you will return no more.

143. (262.)

In taverns better far commune with Thee,
Than pray in mosques, and fail Thy face to see!

O first and last of all Thy creatures Thou;
'Tis Thine to burn, and Thine to cherish me!

144. (264.)

I flew here, as a wandering bird in aim
Up to a higher nest my course to frame;

But, finding here no guide who knows the way,
Fly out by the same door where through I came.

145. (265.)

He binds us in resistless Nature's chain,
And yet bids us our natures to restrain;

Between these counter rules we stand perplexed,
"Hold the jar slant, but all the wine retain."

146. (266.)

They go away, and none is seen returning,
To teach that other world's recondite learning;

'Twill not be shown for dull mechanic prayers,
For prayer is naught without true heartfelt yearning.

147. (267.)

Go to! Cast dust on those deaf skies, who spurn
Thy orisons and bootless prayers, and learn

To quaff the cup, and hover round the fair;
Of all who go, did ever one return?

148. (268.)

Though Khayyam strings no pearls of righteous deeds,
Nor roots from out his soul sin's noisome weeds,

Yet will he not despair of heavenly grace,
Seeing that ONE as two he ne'er misreads.

149. (270.)

We are but chessmen, destined, it is plain,
That great chess player, Heaven, to entertain;

It moves us on life's chess-board to and fro,
And then in death's box shuts us up again.

150. (274.)

I put my lips to the cup, for I did yearn
The means of gaining length of days to learn;

It leaned its lip to mine, and whispered low,
"Drink ! for, once gone, you never will return."

Sin.

151. (277.)

At Tús a bird perched in the ruined street
And on the skull of Káwús set his feet,
 And thus he made his moan, "Alas, poor king !
Thy bells are hushed, thy drums have ceased to beat."

152. (279.)

What launched that golden orb his course to run,
What wrecks his firm foundations, when 'tis done,
 No man of science ever weighed with scales,
Nor made assay with touchstone, no, not one !

Shin.

153. (280.)

I PRAY thee to my counsel lend thine ear,
Cast off this false hypocrisy's veneer ;
This life a moment is, the next all time,
Sell not eternity for earthly gear !

154. (282.)

Khayyam ! rejoice that wine you still can pour,
And still the charms of tulip cheeks adore ;
You'll soon not be, rejoice then that you are,
Think how 'twould be in case you were no more !

155. (283.)

Once, in a potter's shop, a company
Of cups in converse did I chance to see,
And lo ! one lifted up his voice, and cried,
" Who made, who sells, who buys this pottery ? "

156. (287.)

Although the creeds number some seventy-three,
I hold with none but that of loving Thee ;
 What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin ?
Thou'rt all we need, the rest is vanity.

157. (288.)

Tell one by one my scanty virtues o'er ;
As for my sins, forgive them by the score ;
 Let not my faults kindle Thy wrath to flame ;
By blest Muhammad's tomb, forgive once more !

158. (290.)

There is a chalice made with art profound,
With tokens of the Maker's favour crowned ;
 Yet the great Potter takes his masterpiece,
And dashes it to pieces on the ground !

JF^E:

159. (291.)

IN truth wine is a spirit thin as air,
A limpid soul in the cup's earthen ware ;
No dull dense person shall be friend of mine
Save wine-cups, which are dense and also rare.

Kaf.

160. (292.)

O WHEEL of heaven ! no ties of bread you feel,
No ties of salt, you flay me like an eel !

A woman's wheel spins clothes for man and wife,
It does more good than you, O heavenly wheel !

161. (293.)

Did no fair rose my paradise adorn,
I would make shift to deck it with a thorn ;
And if I lacked my prayer-mats, beads, and Shaikh,
Those Christian bells and stoles I would not scorn.

162. (294.)

"If heaven deny me peace and fame," I said,
"Let it be open war and shame instead ;
The man who scorns bright wine had best beware,
I'll arm me with a stone, and break his head !"

163. (295.)

See ! the dawn breaks, and rends night's canopy :
Arise ! and drain a morning draught with me !
Away with gloom ! full many a dawn will break
Looking for us, and we not here to see !

Lam.

164. (301.)

GIVE me my cup in hand, and sing a glee
In concert with the bulbuls' symphony ;
Wine would not gurgle as it leaves the flask,
If drinking mute were right for thee and me !

165. (302.)

The "Truth" will not be shown to lofty thought,
Nor yet with lavished gold may it be bought ;
Till self be mortified for fifty years,
From words to "states" of heart you'll not be brought.

166. (303.)

I solved all problems, down from Saturn's wreath
Unto this lowly sphere of earth beneath,
And leapt out free from bonds of fraud and lies,
Yea, every knot was loosed, save that of death !

167. (304.)

Peace ! the eternal " Has been " and " To be "
 Pass man's experience, and man's theory ;

In joyful seasons naught can vie with wine,
 To all these riddles wine supplies the key !

Dīnī.

168. (305.)

ALLAH, our Lord, is merciful, though just;
Sinner! despair not, but His mercy trust!

For though to-day you perish in your sins,
To-morrow He'll absolve your crumbling dust.

169. (306.)

Your course annoys me, O ye wheeling skies!
Unloose me from your chain of tyrannies!

If none but fools your favours may enjoy,
Then favour me,—I am not very wise!

170. (309.)

When Khayyam quittance at Death's hand receives,
And sheds his outworn life, as trees their leaves,

Full gladly will he sift this world away,
Ere dustmen sift his ashes in their sieves.

171. (310.)

This wheel of heaven, which makes us all afraid,
I liken to a lamp's revolving shade,

The sun the candlestick, the earth the shade,
And men the trembling forms thereon portrayed.

172. (311.)

Who was it that did mix my clay? Not I.

Who spun my web of silk and wool? Not I.

Who wrote upon my forehead all my good,
And all my evil deeds? In truth not I.

173. (312.)

O let us not forecast to-morrow's fears,

But count to-day as gain, my brave compeers!

To-morrow we shall quit this inn, and march
With comrades who have marched seven thousand years.

174. (313.)

Ne'er for one moment leave your cup unused!

Wine keeps heart, faith, and reason too, amused;

Had Iblis swallowed but a single drop,
To worship Adam he had ne'er refused!

175. (316.)

Ah ! by these heavens, that ever circling run,
And by my own base lusts I am undone,

Without the wit to abandon worldly hopes,
And wanting sense the world's allures to shun !

176. (317.)

On earth's green carpet many sleepers lie,
And hid beneath it others I descry ;

And others, not yet come, or passed away,
People the desert of Nonentity !

177. (318.)

Sure of Thy grace, for sins why need I fear ?
How can the pilgrim faint whilst Thou art near ?

On the last day Thy grace will wash me white,
And make my "black record" to disappear.

178. (319.)

Think not I dread from out the world to hie,
And see my disembodied spirit fly ;

I tremble not at death, for death is true,
'Tis my ill life that makes me fear to die !

179. (320.)

Let us shake off dull reason's incubus,
Our tale of days or years cease to discuss,
And take our jugs, and plenish them with wine,
Or ere grim potters make their jugs of us !

180. (321.)

How much more wilt thou chide, O raw divine,
For that I drink, and am a libertine ?

Thou hast thy weary beads, and saintly show,
Leave me my cheerful sweetheart, and my wine !

181. (322.)

Against my lusts I ever war, in vain,
I think on my ill deeds with shame and pain ;
I trust Thou wilt assoil me of my sins,
But even so, my shame must still remain.

182. (323.)

In these twin compasses, O Love, you see
One body with two heads, like you and me,
Which wander round one centre, circlewise,
But at the last in that one point agree.

183. (324.)

We shall not stay here long, but while we do,
'Tis folly wine and sweethearts to eschew ;
 Why ask if earth etern or transient be ?
Since you must go, it matters not to you.

184. (325.)

In reverent sort to mosque I wend my way,
But, by great Allah, it is not to pray ;
 No ! but to steal a prayer-mat ! When 'tis worn,
I go again, another to purvey.

185. (329.)

The world is false, so I'll be false as well,
And with bright wine, and gladness ever dwell !
 They say, " May Allah grant thee penitence ! "
He grants it not, and did he, I'd rebel !

186. (330.)

When Death shall tread me down and pluck me bare,
Like some fat capon, or poor chanticleer ;
 Then mould me to a cup, and fill with wine ;
Its perfume will revive me then and there.

187. (331.)

So far as this world's dealings I have traced,
I find its favours shamefully misplaced ;

Allah be praised ! I see myself debarred
From all its boons, and wrongfully disgraced.

188. (332.)

'Tis dawn ! my heart with wine I will recruit,
And dash to bits the glass of good repute ;

My long-extending hopes I will renounce,
And grasp long tresses, and the charming lute.

189. (333.)

Though I had sinned the sins of all mankind,
I know Thou would'st to mercy be inclined ;

Thou sayest, "I will help in time of need :"
One needier than me where wilt Thou find ?

190. (334.)

Am I a wine-bibber ? What if I am ?
Giaour, or infidel ? Suppose I am ?

Each sect miscalls me, but I heed them not,
I am my own, and, what I am, I am.

191. (335.)

All my life long to drink I have not ceased,
And drink I will to-night on Kader's feast ;
 And throw my arms about the wine-jar's neck,
And kiss its lip, and clasp it to my breast !

192. (336.)

I know what is, and what is not, I know
The lore of things above, and things below,
 But all this lore will cheerfully renounce,
If one a higher lore than drink can show.

193. (337.)

Though I drink wine, I am no libertine,
Nor am I grasping, save of cups of wine ;
 I scruple to adore myself, like you ;
For this cause to wine-worship I incline.

194. (339.)

We make the wine-jar's lip our place of prayer,
And drink in lessons of true manhood there,
 And pass our lives in taverns, if perchance
The time misspent in mosques we may repair.

195. (340.)

Man is the whole creation's summary,
The precious apple of great wisdom's eye ;
 The circle of existence is a ring,
Whereof the signet is humanity.

196. (341.)

With fancies, as with wine, our heads we turn,
Aspire to heaven, and earth's low trammels spurn ;
 But, when we drop this fleshly clog, 'tis seen
From dust we came, and back to dust return.

197. (343.)

I never drank of joy's sweet cordial,
But grief's fell hand infused a drop of gall ;
 Nor dipped my bread in pleasure's piquant salt,
But briny sorrow made me smart withal !

198. (344.)

At dawn to tavern haunts I wend my way,
And with distraught Kalendars pass the day ;
 O Thou ! who know'st things secret, and things
 known,
Grant me Thy grace, that I may learn to pray !

199. (346.)

Never from worldly toils have I been free,
Never for one short moment glad to be!

I served a long apprenticeship to fate,
But yet of fortune gained no mastery.

200. (347.)

One hand with Koran, one with wine-cup dight,
I half incline to wrong, and half to right;

The azure-marbled sky looks down on me
A sorry Moslem, yet not heathen quite.

201. (350.)

My critics call me a philosopher,
But Allah knows full well they greatly err;

I know not even what I am, much less
Why on this earth I am a sojourner!

202. (352.)

Quoth rose, "I am the Yusuf flower, I swear,
For in my mouth rich golden gems I bear:"

I said, "Show me another proof." Quoth she,
"Behold this blood-stained vesture that I wear!"

203. (353.)

I studied with the masters long ago,
And long ago did master all they know ;
 Hear now the end and issue of it all,
From earth I came, and like the wind I go !

204. (355.)

To find great Jamshed's world-reflecting bowl
I compassed sea and land, and viewed the whole ;
 But, when I asked the wary sage, I learned
That bowl was my own body, and my soul !

205. (356.)

Me, cruel Queen ! you ever captivate,
From valiant knight to puny pawn translate ;
 And marshal all your force and ply your arts,
To take my castles, and myself checkmate !

206. (357.)

If Allah wills me not to will aright,
How can I frame my will to will aright ?

 Each single act I will must needs be wrong,
Since none but He can make me will aright.

207. (360.)

Endure this world without my wine I cannot!
Drag on life's load without my cups I cannot!
I am the slave of that sweet moment, when
They say, "Take one more goblet," and I cannot!

Dun.

208. (364.)

MAKE light to me the world's oppressive weight,
And hide my failings from the people's hate,
And grant me peace to-day, and on the morrow
Deal with me as Thy mercy may dictate !

209. (365).

Souls that are well informed of this world's state,
Its weal and woe with equal mind await,
For, be it weal we meet, or be it woe,
The weal doth pass, and woe too hath its date.

210. (366.)

Lament not fortune's want of constancy,
But up ! and seize her favours ere they flee ;
If fortune always cleaved to other men,
How could a turn of luck have come to thee ?

211. (367.)

Chief of old friends ! hearken to what I say,
Let not heaven's treacherous wheel your heart dismay ;
 But rest contented in your humble nook,
And watch the games that wheel is wont to play.

212. (368.)

Hear now Khayyam's advice, and bear in mind,
Consort with revellers, though they be maligned,
 Cast down the gates of abstinence and prayer,
Yea, drink, and even rob, but, aye be kind !

213. (374.)

Have you no shame for all the sins you do,
Sins of omission and commission too ?

 Suppose you gain the world, you can but leave it,
You cannot carry it away with you !

214. (376.)

Some look for truth in creeds, and forms, and rules ;
Some grope for doubts or dogmas in the schools ;
 But from behind the veil a voice proclaims,
“ Your road lies neither here nor there, O fools.”

215. (379.)

Had I the power great Allah to advise,
I'd bid him sweep away this earth and skies,
And build a better, where, unclogged and free,
The clear soul might achieve her high emprise.

216. (381.)

To drain the cup, to hover round the fair,
Can hypocritic arts with these compare ?
If all who love and drink are going wrong,
There's many a wight of heaven may well despair !

217. (383.)

'Tis well in reputation to abide,
'Tis shameful against heaven to rail and chide ;
Still, head had better ache with over drink,
Than be puffed up with Pharisaic pride !

218. (385.)

O Lord ! from self-conceit deliver me,
Sever from self, and occupy with Thee !
This self is captive to earth's good and ill,
Make me beside myself, and set me free !

219. (387.)

Since all man's business in this world of woe
Is sorrow's pangs to feel, and grief to know,
 Happy are they that never come at all,
And they that, having come, are first to go !

220. (389.)

Nor you nor I can read the etern decree,
To that enigma we can find no key ;
 They talk of you and me *behind* the veil,
But, sweep that veil away, and where are *we* ?

Claw.

221. (390.)

O Love, for ever doth heaven's wheel design
To take away thy precious life, and mine ;
 Sit we upon this turf, 'twill not be long
Ere turf shall grow upon my dust, and thine !

222. (392.)

Yon palace, towering to the welkin blue,
Where kings did bow them down, and homage do,
 I saw a ringdove on its arches perched,
And thus she made complaint, " Coo Coo, Coo, Coo ! "

223. (393.)

We come and go, but for the gain, where is it ?
And spin life's woof, but for the warp, where is it ?
 And many a righteous man has burned to dust
'Neath heaven's blue rondure, but their smoke, where
is it ?

224. (395.)

Such as I am, Thy power created me,
Thy care hath kept me for a century !

Through all these years I make experiment,
If my sins or Thy mercy greater be.

225. (396.)

"Take up thy cup and goblet, Love," I said,
"Haunt purling river bank, and grassy glade;

Full many a moon-like form has heaven's wheel
Oft into cup, oft into goblet, made!"

226. (397.)

We buy new wine and old, our cups to fill,
And sell for two grains this world's good and ill ;

Know you where you will go to after death ?
Set wine before me, and go where you will !

227. (398.)

Was e'er man born who never went astray ?
Did ever mortal pass a sinless day ?

If I do ill, do not requite with ill !
Evil for evil how canst Thou repay ?

228. (401.)

Man, like a ball, hither and thither goes,
As fate's resistless bat directs the blows ;
But He, who gives thee up to this rude sport,
He knows what drives thee, yea, He knows, He knows !

229. (403.)

Let not base avarice enslave thy mind,
Nor vain ambition in its trammels bind ;
Be sharp as fire, as running water swift,
Not, like earth's dust, the sport of every wind !

¶e.

230. (406.)

O THOU who hast done ill, and ill alone,
And thinkest to find mercy at the throne,
Hope not for mercy ! for good left undone
Cannot be done, nor evil done undone !

231. (408.)

These heavens, methinks, are like an o'erturned cup,
Whereto the wise with awe keep gazing up ;
So o'er his love, the cup, the bottle stoops,
Feigning to kiss, and gives her blood to sup !

232. (410.)

The drop wept for his severance from the sea,
But the sea smiled, for " I am all," said he,
" The Truth is all in all, there's naught beside,
That one point circling apes plurality."

233. (414.)

Bulbuls, doting on roses, oft complain
How foward breezes rend their voils in twain ;
Sit we beneath this rose, which many a time
Has dropped to earth, and sprung from earth again.

234. (418.)

Alas ! my wasted life has gone to wrack !
What with forbidden meats, and lusts, alack !
And leaving undone what 'twas right to do,
And doing wrong, my face is very black !

235. (419.)

I could repent of all, but of wine, never !
I could dispense with all, but with wine, never !
If so be I became a Musulman,
Could I abjure my Magian wine ? no, never !

236. (420.)

We rest our hopes on Thy free grace alone,
Nor seek by merits for our sins to atone ;
Mercy drops where it lists, and estimates
Ill done as undone, good undone as done.

237. (424.)

O unenlightened race of humankind,
Ye are a nothing, built on empty wind !
Yea, a mere nothing, hovering in the abyss,
A void before you, and a void behind !

238. (426.)

Vain study of philosophy eschew !
Rather let tangled curls attract your view ;
And shed the bottle's life-blood in your cup,
Or e'er death shed your blood, and feast on you.

239. (427.)

O HEART! canst thou the darksome riddle read,
 Where wisest men have failed, wilt thou succeed ?
 Quaff wine, and make thy heaven here below,
 Who knows if heaven above will be thy meed ?

240. (428.)

They that have passed away, and gone before,
 Sleep in delusion's dust for evermore ;
 Go, boy, and fetch some wine, this is the truth,
 Their dogmas were but air, and wind their lore !

241. (432.)

With many a snare Thou dost beset my way,
 And threatenest, if I fall therein, to slay ;
 Thy rule resistless sways the world, yet Thou
 Imputest sin, when I do but obey !

242. (433.)

To Thee, whose essence baffles human thought,
Our sins and righteous deeds alike seem naught;
May Thy grace sober me, though drunk with sins,
And pardon all the ill that I have wrought!

243. (436.)

O soul! could you but doff this flesh and bone,
You'd soar a sprite about the heavenly throne;
Had you no shame to leave your starry home,
And dwell an alien on this earthy zone?

244. (437.)

Ah, potter, stay thine hand! with ruthless art
Put not to such base use man's mortal part!
See, thou art mangling on thy cruel wheel
Faridun's fingers, and Kai Khosrau's heart!

245. (439.)

From this world's kitchen toil not to obtain
Those dainties, seeming real, but really vain,
Which greedy worldlings gorge to their own loss;
Renounce that loss, so loss shall prove thy gain!

246. (442.)

Ah ! would there were a place of rest from pain,
Which we, poor pilgrims, might at last attain,

And after many thousand wintry years,
Renew our life, like flowers, and bloom again !

247. (444.)

Winter is past, and spring-tide has begun,
Soon will the pages of life's book be done !

Well saith the sage, "Life is a poison rank,
And antidote, save grape-juice, there is none."

248. (446.)

Last night I dashed my cup against a stone,
In a mad drunken freak, as I must own,

And lo ! the cup cried out in agony,
"You too, like me, shall soon be overthrown."

249. (449.)

Open the door ! O entrance who procurest,
And guide the way, O Thou of guides the surest !

Directors born of men shall not direct me,
Their counsel comes to naught, but Thou endurest !

250. (452.)

Give me a skin of wine, a crust of bread,
A pittance bare, a book of verse to read ;
With thee, O love, to share my lowly roof,
I would not take the Sultan's realm instead !

251. (459.)

Behold, where'er we turn our ravished eyes,
Sweet verdure springs, and crystal Kausars rise ;
And plains, once bare as hell, now smile as heaven :
Enjoy this heaven with maids of Paradise !

252. (463.)

When dawn doth silver the dark firmament,
Why shrills the bird of dawning his lament ?
It is to show in dawn's bright looking-glass
How of thy careless life a night is spent.

253. (464.)

Cupbearer, come ! from thy full-throated ewer
Pour blood-red wine, the world's despite to cure !
Where can I find another friend like wine,
So genuine, so solacing, so pure ?

254. (466.)

It chanced into a potter's shop I strayed,
 He turned his wheel and deftly plied his trade,
 And out of monarchs' heads, and beggars' feet,
 Fair heads and handles for his pitchers made !

255. (471.)

Who framed the lots of quick and dead but Thou ?
 Who turns the troublous wheel of heaven but Thou ?
 Though we are sinful slaves, is it for Thee
 To blame us ? Who created us but Thou ?

256. (473.)

A Shaikh beheld a harlot, and quoth he,
 " You seem a slave to drink and lechery ; "
 And she made answer, " What I seem I am,
 But, Master, are you all you seem to be ? "

257. (474.)

If, like a ball, earth to my house were borne,
 When drunk, I'd rate it at a barley-corn ;
 Last night they offered me in pawn for wine,
 But the rude vintner laughed that pledge to scorn.

258. (475.)

Now in thick clouds Thy face Thou dost immerse,
And now display it in this universe ;

Thou the spectator, Thou the spectacle,
Sole to Thyself Thy glories dost rehearse.

259. (476.)

Better to make one soul rejoice with glee,
Than plant a desert with a colony ;

Rather one freeman bind with chains of love,
Than set a thousand prisoned captives free !

260. (478.)

Wherever you can get two maunds of wine,
Set to, and drink it like a libertine ;

Whoso acts thus will set his spirit free
From saintly airs like yours, and grief like mine.

261. (481.)

Yes ! here am I with wine and feres again !
I did repent, but, ah ! 'twas all in vain ;

Preach not to me of Noah and his flood,
But pour a flood of wine to drown my pain !

262. (484.)

Angel of joyful foot ! the dawn is nigh ;
 Pour wine, and lift thy tuneful voice on high,
 Sing how Jamsheds and Khosraus bit the dust,
 Whelmed by the rolling months, from Tir to Dai !

263. (486.)

Oh that great Allah would rebuild these skies,
 And earth, and that at once, before my eyes,
 And either rase my name from off his roll,
 Or else relieve my dire necessities !

264. (488.)

Ah ! brand, ah burning brand, foredoomed to burn
 In fires of dread Gehennom in thy turn,
 Presume not to teach Allah clemency,
 For who art thou to teach, or he to learn ?

265. (490.)

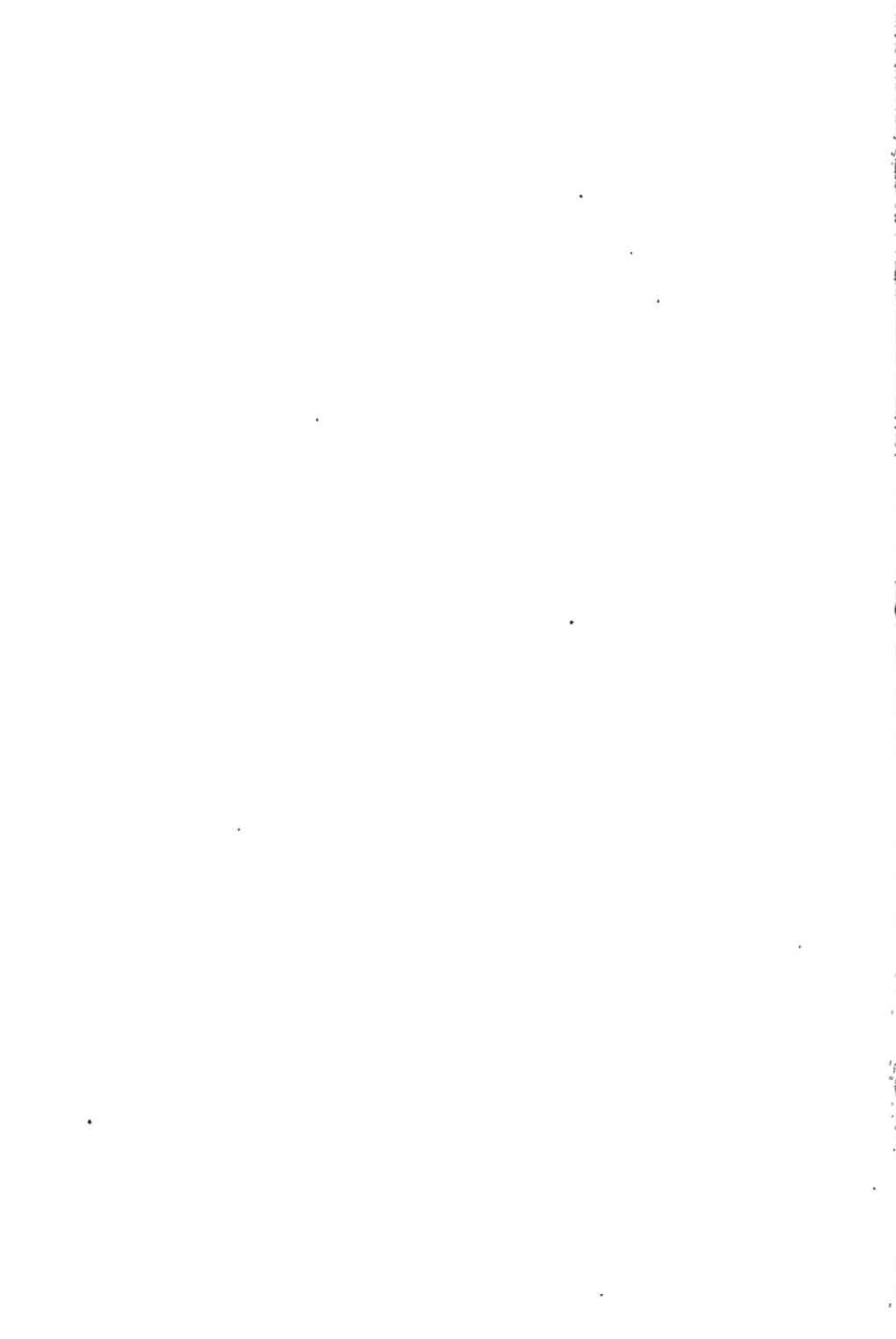
I never would have come, had I been asked,
 I would as lief not go, if I were asked,
 And, to be short, I would annihilate
 All coming, being, going, were I asked !

266. (493.)

A potter at his work I chanced to see,
Pounding some earth and shreds of pottery ;
I looked with eyes of insight, and methought
"Twas Adam's dust with which he made so free !

267. (500.)

No longer hug your grief and vain despair,
But in this unjust world be just and fair ;
And since the substance of the world is naught,
Think *you* are naught, and so shake off dull care !



NOTES.



NOTES.

QUATRAIN 1.

The numbers in brackets are those of the quatrains in my “Quatrains of Omar Khayyám : Persian Text with English Translation,” published by Trübner in 1883.

7.

Lines were engraved on the bowl to measure out the draughts.—Blochmann.

14.

“Wheel of heaven,” meaning fortune, destiny. Sir Thomas Browne, in the “Religio Medici,” speaks of the “wheel of things.”

24.

So Job—

“Thine hands have made me ; yet Thou dost destroy me.”

25.

'Isa (Jesus), type of the spiritual guide.

27.

Blochmann quotes similar sentiments from Nizami and Hafiz; it is the view condemned by St. Paul :—

“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ?”

28.

Meaning, souls re-absorbed in the Divine essence have no concern with the material heaven and hell.

31.

See Koran lxxxii. 1.

32.

This refers to the Esoteric doctrine of the Sufis or Mystics.

37.

Compare Hafiz, Ode 79—

“Wherever love is, there is the light of the Beloved’s face.”

38.

Perhaps a hit at the Sufis, who taught annihilation of self in order to obtain communion with the Deity.

39.

So Falstaff—

“If sack and sugar be a sin, God help the wicked.”

40.

Bahram and Jamshed were ancient kings of Persia.

45.

A play on his patronymic, “Khayyám,” i.e., the tent-maker.

48.

Compare Horace—

“*Fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum.*”

50.

Jihun is the Oxus.

55.

As Canon Mozley says of the Bible, the Koran "is in one department of its language necessitarian, in another it uses the language of freewill." The orthodox Moslem theologians generally adopt the first of these alternatives, and practically stand committed to the view that no events can occur except those that do occur, consequently that Allah is the author of all evil actions as well as good. Thus the *Gulshan i Raz*, line 631—

"The Truth (Allah) now and again manifests itself as evil ;"

and in a remarkable letter of the Sheikh-ul-Islam, a French translation of which appeared in the *Spectator*, February 11, 1888, occurs the following passage : "Il faut attribuer comme un article de foi, le bien et le mal à la providence de Dieu." Devout Moslems are always labouring, as for instance in the *Masnavi*, to explain away the difficulties resulting from this doctrine. In this and similar quatrains Omar attacks these same difficulties in his trenchant manner.

61.

The prophet Mohammed never rose to St. Paul's conception, "It is raised a spiritual body." He conceived of the body after the resurrection as the exact counterpart of the present material body, and accordingly made in his Paradise ample provision of carnal and creature comforts to supply its needs. The more reflective Moslems, such as the Sufis, are inclined to explain away the Houris, &c., as merely allegorical, whilst Omar turns the Prophet's Paradise into ridicule. See the "*Gulshan i Raz*," the mystic "*Rose Garden*" (Trübner, 1880), p. 89.

62.

Literally "Alif," meaning 'the One (God), "is enough." Probably a quotation. Hafiz (Ode, 416) uses the same expression—

"He who knows the One knows all."

In another Ode he writes—

"Hafiz, when preaching Unity
With Unitarian pen,
Blot out and cancel every page
That speaks of spirits or men;"

i.e., all existences other than the Deity are merely phenomena.

66.

Allah writes his decrees with the "pen" on the "tablet." See Koran lxviii. 1. Omar hints that all these are merely subjective.

68.

Alluding to the life-giving breath of Jesus, and the hand of Moses, "white as snow." See Exodus iv. 6.

69.

This is one of the quatrains which lends itself either to a mystic or material interpretation. For the mystic view see the preface to my "Masnavi i Ma'navi, the Spiritual Couplets of Jalal ud Din. i Rumi" (Trübner, 1887).

73.

So Job—

"Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest oppress, that Thou shouldest despise the work of Thine hands?"

78.

Borák, the steed on which Mohammad made his famous nocturnal ascent into heaven.

82.

So Job—

"No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."

93.

Voltaire has some similar lines in his poem on the Lisbon earthquake.

95.

Bairam, the feast on the first of the month following Ramazan, the month of fasting.

97.

Being, *i.e.*, the Deity, the only real existence, and Not-being, the nonentity in which His attributes are reflected. See Gulshan i Raz, p. 14.

101.

Were it not for the Almighty's "Canon 'gainst self slaughter."

102.

"Beyond his nature," *i.e.*, beyond the limits of his own thought.

104.

So Job—

"The thunder of his power who can understand!"

106.

Mohammad said, "My people shall be divided into seventy-three sects, all of which, save one, shall have their portion in the fire." Pococke, Specimen, 210.

107.

A hit at the casuistry on the subject of wine.

108.

A triple divorce is irrevocable. Koran ii. 2-30.

110.

"False dawn," *i.e.*, the faint light before sunrise.

122.

A hit at the astrologers.

124.

Compare Ecclesiastes—

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour . . . for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

127.

One, *i.e.*, the Deity.

135.

See Koran ii. 172—

"There is no piety in turning your face to the east or west, but he is pious who believeth in God . . . and disburseth his wealth to the needy," &c.

Sunna means the tradition of the elders.

136.

So Hafiz, Ode 355 (Blockhaus)—

"How can our eyes behold Thee, as Thou art?"

148.

I.e., holds firmly the doctrine of the Unity of the Deity.
See Hafiz, Ode 465.

151.

Tís, at one time capital of Persia, was near Nishapúr.
Kawús, one of the Kaiannian dynasty.

155.

Men's speculations as to their origin and destiny.

156.

Formulas of faith are indifferent. See Gulshan i Raz, p. 83.

161.

So Pope—

"For forms and creeds let graceless zealots fight:
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

This is the doctrine condemned by the 18th Article of Religion. See Masnavi, p. 30.

165.

Literally, until you dig up your life, and eat blood for fifty years, they will not show you the way from words to "states." The hearing of the word accompanied by self-discipline leads the hearer on to experience what the Sufis called "states" of heart, *i.e.*, intuition of the Truth (God) by the "eye of certainty," communion with the Truth, &c. Compare St. Paul, "Faith cometh by hearing," and Job, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee." Also see Masnavi, p. 166.

173.

The Moslem belief was that the world was 7000 years old in Omar's time. Compare Hafiz, Ruba'i, 10.

174.

See Koran ii. 31.

176.

The sleepers on the earth are those sunk in the sleep of superstition and ignorance.

177.

See Koran xiii. 47.

178.

Compare Sir Philip Sidney—

“Since Nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As Nature's work, why should we fear to die?”

182.

Mr. Fitzgerald quotes a similar conceit from the poet Donne, for which see Ward's “English Poets,” i. 562.

184.

To “steal a prayer-mat” is to pray to be seen of men (M. Nicolas)—a satire on some hypocrite, perhaps himself.

191.

Kader, the “night [of power]” on which the Koran was revealed. See Koran xcvi. 1.

195.

Man is the microcosm. See Gulshan i Raz, p. 15—

“The captain jewel of the carcanet.”

198.

Kalenders are a class of Sufi dervishes.

201.

Filsafi, *i.e.*, "philosopher," always has the sense of rationalist. Compare Montaigne, "Que sais je?"

202.

Yusuf is the type of manly beauty. The yellow stamens are compared to his teeth. Jami has a similar conceit. See "Yusuf wa Zuleikha."

203.

Mr. Fitzgerald cites the dying exclamation of Nizam-ul-Mulk, "I am going in the hands of the wind."

204.

King Jamshed's cup, which reflected the whole world, is the Holy Grail of Persian poetry, meaning "man is the microcosm." So George Herbert—

"Man is one world, and hath another to attend him."

See Gulshan i Raz, p. 15, note.

205.

The pun on *ruk̤h*, "cheek," and *ruk̤h*, "castle" baffles reproduction.

210.

This was a speech of Kisra Parvīz to his sultana. See Bicknell's Hafiz, p. 73.

212.

A rather violent extension of the doctrine, "Mercy is better than sacrifice."

214.

Truth, hidden from theologians and philosophers, is revealed to Mystics. See *Gulshan i Raz*, p. 11.

215.

This recalls the celebrated speech of Alphonso X., King of Castile.

217.

Compare *Tartuffe* i. 6.

218.

A Mystic's prayer.

219.

Compare the well-known chorus in the *OEdipus Coloneus*.

220.

Meaning we are part of the "Veil of Phenomena," which hides the Divine "Noumenon." If that be swept away, what becomes of us? See *Gulshan i Raz*, p. 63, note 1.

222.

Coo (*Kū*) means "Where are they?" Mr. Binning found this quatrain inscribed on the ruins of Persepolis.

223.

So Ecclesiastes—

"There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool."

"Smoke," *i.e.*, trace.

230.

This quatrain is often ascribed to Abu Sa'id bin Abu'l Khair, and is supposed to have been written in answer to No. 236, which is attributed to Avicenna.

231.

Blood is an emblem of hate.

232.

Compare Gulshan i Raz, p. 69, and Masnavi, p. 24.

237.

This recalls the term "*Nunc stans*," applied to time by the Schoolmen.

240.

So Ecclesiastes—

"I gave my heart to know wisdom . . . and perceived that this also is vanity."

244.

Faridun and Kai Khosrau were ancient kings of Persia.
So Hamlet—

"Imperial Cesar dead, and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."

251.

Kausar, a fountain in Paradise.

252.

So Job—

"Hast spread the sky as a molten looking-glass."

258.

Compare the Vulgate, "*Iudens in orbe terrarum*," and Gulshan i Raz, p. 75.

262.

Tir and *Dai* were April and December.

263.

This rather sins against Horace's canon, "*Nec Deus interset,*" &c.

264.

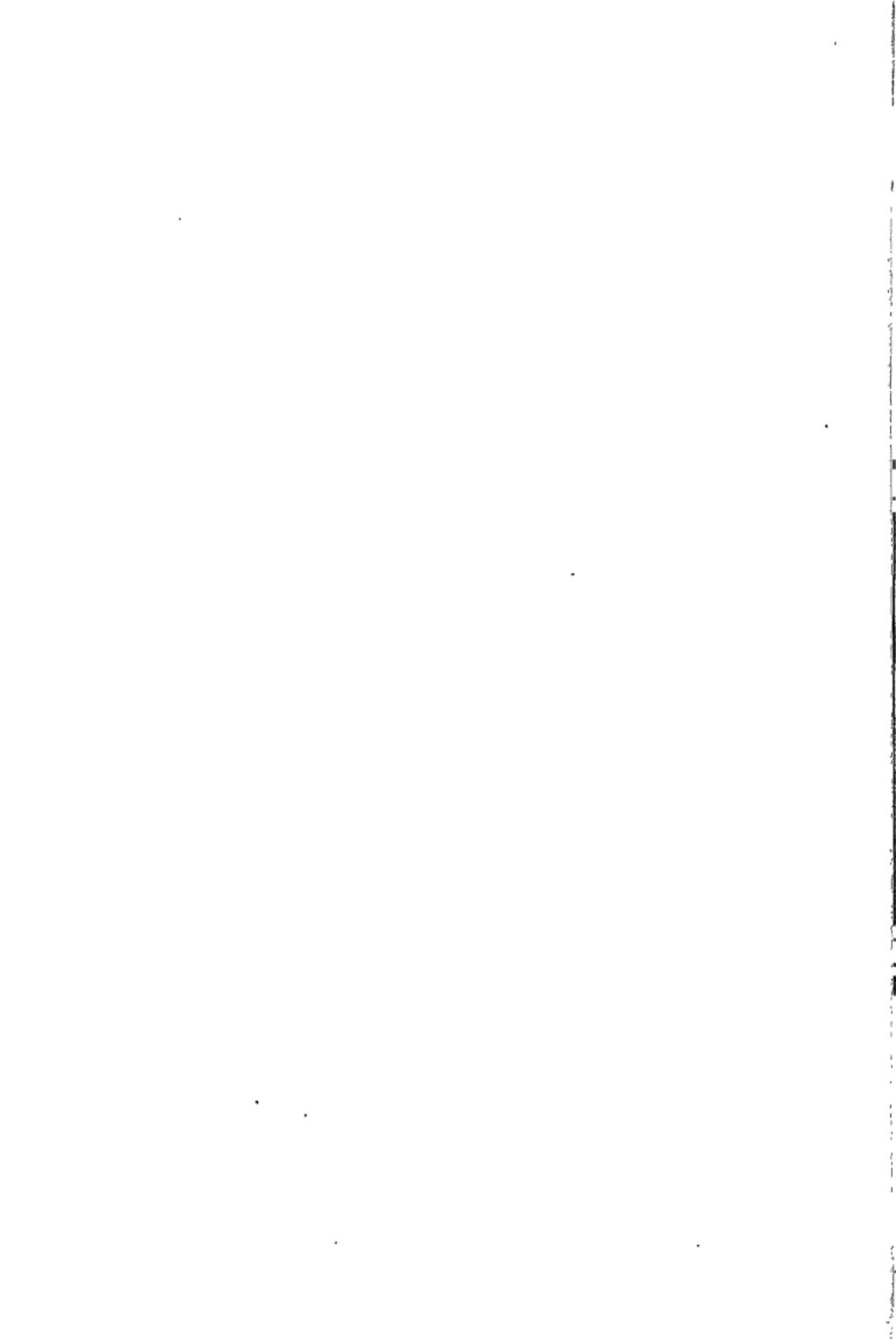
Here I have taken hints from Mr. Keene and Mr. Fitzgerald, and I have to acknowledge obligations to the latter in several other places.

265.

So the Ecclesiast—

"Therefore I hated life . . . for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."





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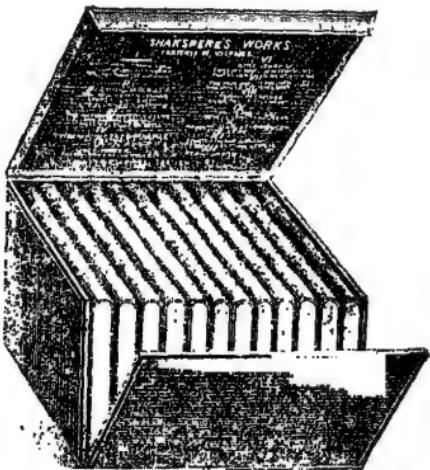
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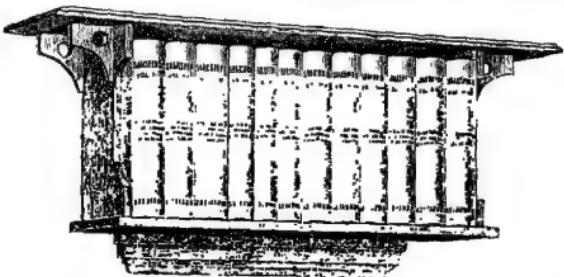
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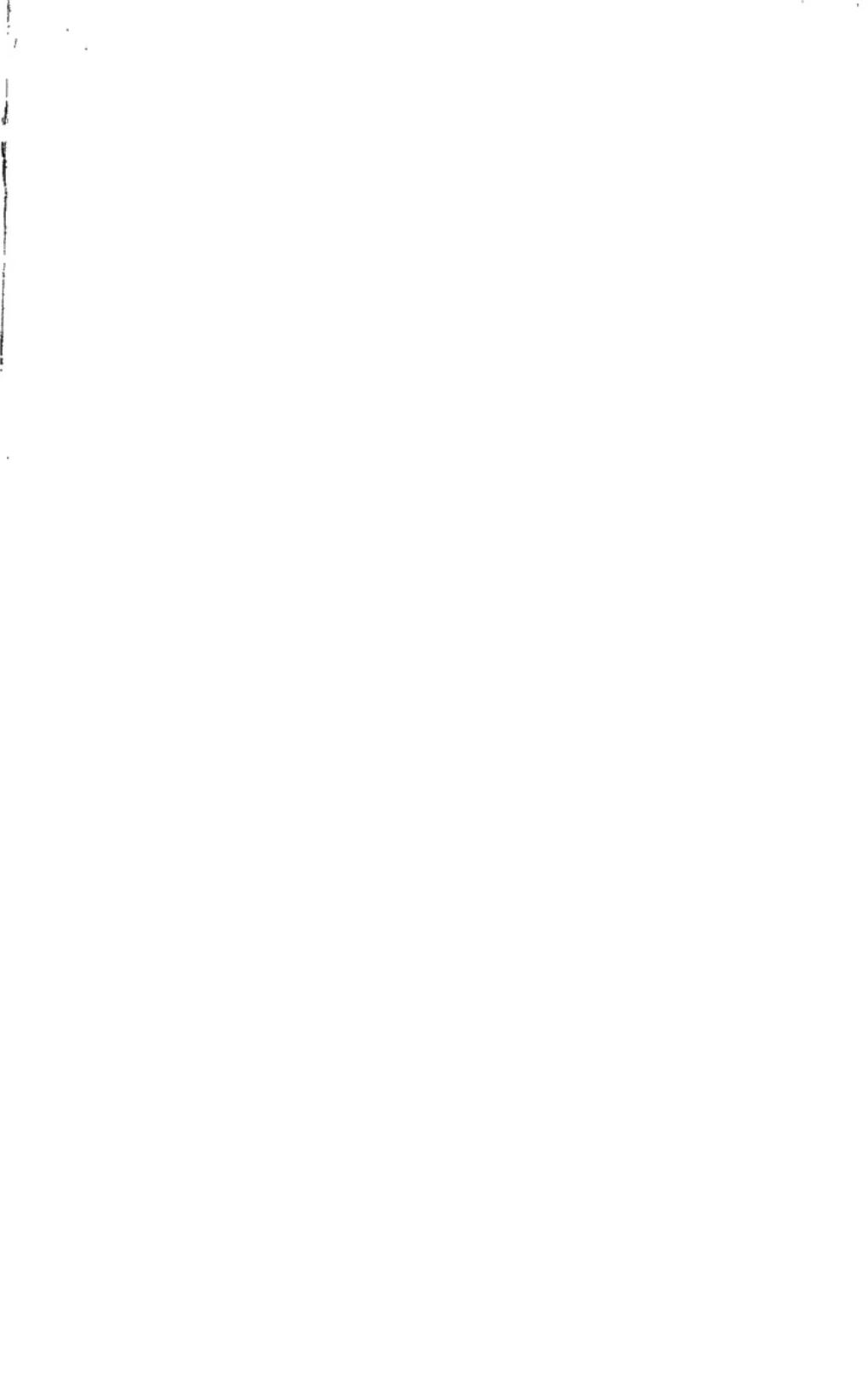
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